

sojourners

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Faith in Action for Social Justice

Resistance and Resurrection

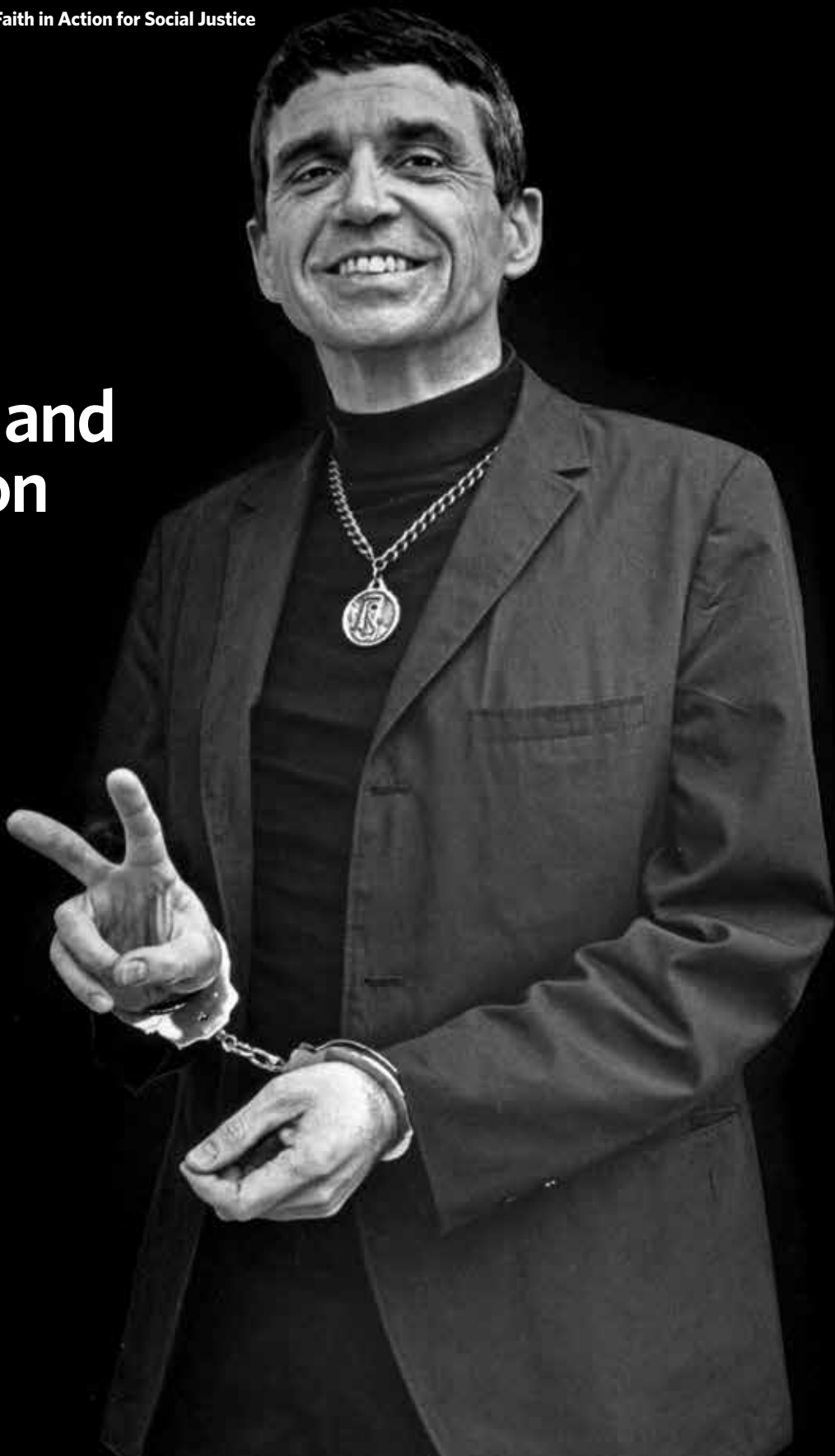
The unchained life of Daniel Berrigan

PLUS:

Building community on the front porch

Liberation theology in the kitchen

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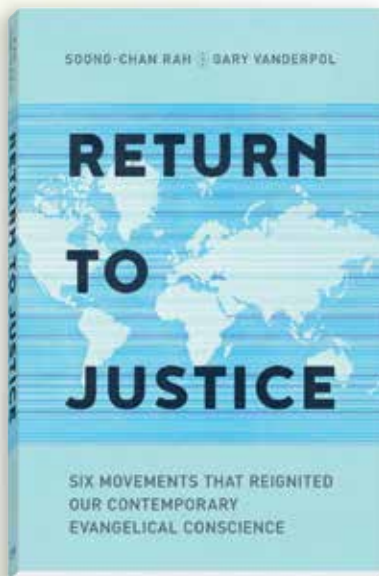
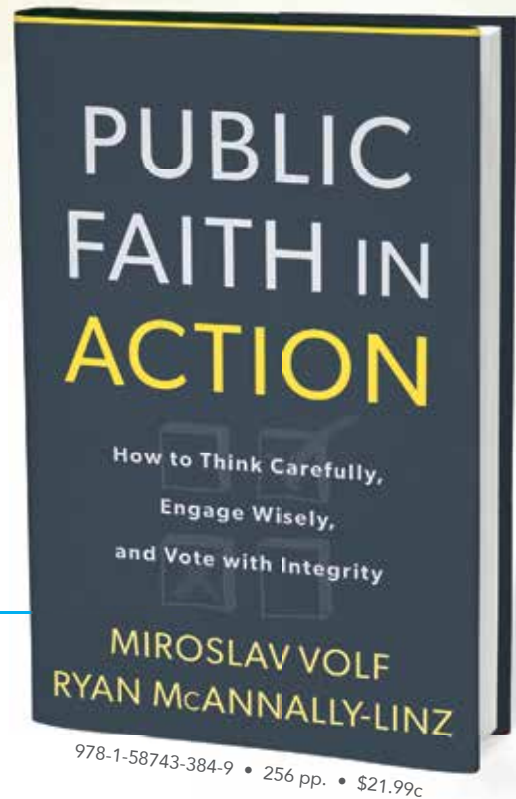
PUBLIC FAITH — FOR A — POLARIZED AGE

"An excellent contribution."

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"A must-read."

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RECLAIMING AN EVANGELICAL HISTORY OF ACTIVISM

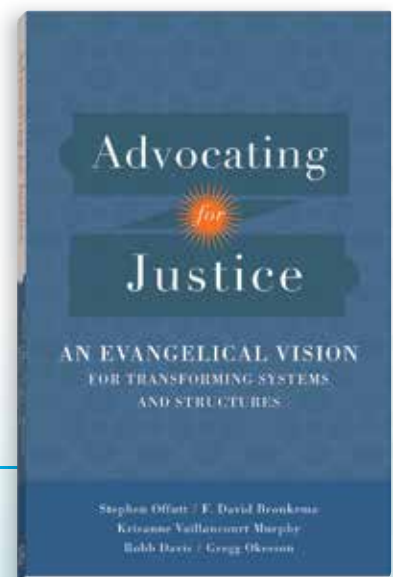
"I cannot recommend this book strongly enough. *Return to Justice* should be read by anyone who wants to understand evangelicals and Christianity on a much deeper level than the shallow political definitions in the media."

—Jim Wallis

HOW TRANSFORMING STRUCTURES RESULTS IN LASTING CHANGE

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—Lynne Hybels



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WE'VE ALL BEEN THERE. "Working for social justice seems like forever," writes Katharine Preston in this issue. "I am weary of being tedious to those around me who do not understand my seemingly quixotic campaigns." With a nod to E.B. White, who once admitted "I arise in the morning torn between a desire to improve the world and a desire to enjoy the world. This makes it hard to plan the day," Preston wrestles with this tension.

Jesuit priest Daniel Berrigan (1921–2016) did both. Following his death in April, Berrigan was lauded as a prophet, poet, and peacemaker, a tireless resister of the U.S. military industrial complex who burned draft records, poured blood on nuclear warheads, and called upon us to embrace life in all its forms, from the womb to old age.

In this issue, we also remember Berrigan's powerful influence on us at Sojourners as well, as someone who loved extravagantly: as an uncle, a minister to people with HIV/AIDS, a teacher who invited students into communion over a shared cup of coffee.

For many of us at Sojourners, this is how we remember Dan: a living witness for life, a people's priest, an intricate poet, yes, but also a friend. In the early days of Sojourners, Dan gave us an example of how Christians could be witnesses for peace at a time when we desperately needed to know such a thing was possible. And as



Dan Berrigan teaching scripture at Sojourners Community in the 1980s.

we stumbled our way through decades of community life and activism, Dan was often there spurring us on, with a smile and wiggling eyebrows, to deeper faithfulness. Loving the world and helping change it.

In a 1995 interview with *Sojourners*, Berrigan recalled the early years of the Vietnam War when Christians were first trying to organize against it. Although the work was dif-

ficult, Berrigan explained that it was also fun. "We'd invariably start with Eucharist and then end up with a terrific party. Then people would say, 'Why do you party so much?' That to me was a very strange question. ... It's self-explanatory." ■

Letters

Turkish Delight

I read with interest Catherine Woodiwiss' column about her recent visit to the Hagia Sophia in Istanbul ("Making Room for Delight," June 2016). We also recently visited this magnificent edifice on a trip to Istanbul in March. On the day we arrived, a terrorist bomb had been exploded and we were greeted with a bit of apprehension by our guide, hoping we would not let this latest assault stop us from enjoying the Turkish culture and history.

We were staying near the Hagia Sophia and the Great Blue Mosque, so our first visit was to these two beautiful buildings. We were filled with awe, wonder, and delight. But even more, we were comforted by the message of comfort and love that was so clearly and strongly delivered by both "wombs" of faith. Fear is a feeling that closes a door, but the refusal to fear is even more powerful at keeping doors open.

From the Hagia Sophia to the many beautiful mosques, from the crowded bazaars to the busy streets and ferries, we enjoyed an assortment of "Turkish delight." Thank you, Catherine, for associating "delight" with such a wonderful symbol of God's enduring presence in the world.

Bill Turney
Houston, Texas

Blessed Bikes

Two years ago, at the age of 56 and not having cycled since college, I returned to cycling. Therefore I resonated with Steve Holt's "Holy Rollers" in the June 2016 issue. Most recently, a friend and I drove more than an hour to have our bikes blessed in the first Blessing of the Bikes at Pittsburgh's East Liberty Presbyterian Church. We then joined some of the riders, including the pastor and minister of music, for a six-mile ride up Highland Avenue, past Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, to Highland Park, and back. It was a meaningful, fun, blessed event. The Blessing of the Fleet at the beginning of the season is a long tradition in boating communities and my sea kayak has been so blessed. Now my bike has too.

John Edward Harris
Wellsburg, West Virginia

Idleness or Patience?

I was greatly moved by what Tobias Winright said about patience as a patient in his article in the April issue ("Learning the Art of Patience"). Rather than a Gen Xer stricken by traumatic brain injury, I am a Boomer in his mid-60s anticipating the patience required by the dialed-down lifestyle of retirement and the limitations

imposed by an aging body.

The roots of impatience as a patient are deeply embedded in our culture. Long before the fragmented busyness Tobias speaks of influenced by MTV, the Puritan work ethic taught us to avoid "idleness" of any kind. A much older work on patience than those used by Tobias is a 17th century sonnet in which John Milton is the patient, having gone blind midlife and unable to continue his important governmental service. When he tries to excuse his idleness to God, a personified Patience replies, "God doth not need either man's work or his own gifts." Then he closes the poem with these famous words: "They also serve who only stand and wait." What Tobias tells us is what we do while we wait.

Donald M. Brasted-Maki
Eugene, Oregon

Correction: In our July 2016 issue, we erroneously named Ryan and Amy Green as founders of Numinous Games; Josh Larson and Ryan founded the company.

"But what about..." Write to letters@sojo.net or Letters, *Sojourners*, 3333 14th St. NW, Suite 200, Washington DC, 20010. Include your name, city, and state. Letters may be edited.

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BY JIM WALLIS

Billy Graham's Conversion to Peace



IN 1978, a *Sojourners* subscriber sent me this quote from a European newspaper reporting on Billy Graham's visit to the Nazi concentration camp in Auschwitz, Poland: "The present insanity of the global arms race," Graham said, "if continued, will lead inevitably to a conflagration so great that Auschwitz will seem like a minor rehearsal." The U.S. media had not reported on Graham's statement.

I wrote to Billy Graham and asked if what he said, after visiting Auschwitz for the first time, indicated a change of heart for him on nuclear weapons. Billy wrote back to say it did. He agreed to an interview with *Sojourners* to explain how his thinking had changed about the nuclear arms race, saying that it felt to him like a moral and spiritual question and not just a political issue.

August marks the 71st anniversary of the U.S. atomic bombing of

The goal, Graham said, is the "total destruction of nuclear arms."

Hiroshima, Japan. When President Obama visited Hiroshima earlier this year, he encouraged leaders to "pursue a world without nuclear weapons" (which is sadly and dangerously ironic coming from a president who is overseeing a 30-year, \$1 trillion upgrade of the U.S. nuclear weapons arsenal).

Billy Graham, in that 1979 interview with *Sojourners*, was clear in his view of the threat posed by nuclear weapons:

Is a nuclear holocaust inevitable if the arms race is not stopped? Frankly, the answer is almost certainly yes. Now I know that some people feel human beings are so terrified of a nuclear war that no one would dare start one. I wish I could accept that. But neither

history nor the Bible gives much reason for optimism. What guarantee is there that the world will never produce another maniacal dictator like Hitler or Amin? As a Christian I take sin seriously, and the Christian should be the first to know that the human heart is deceitful and desperately wicked, as Jeremiah says. We can be capable of unspeakable horror, no matter how educated or technically sophisticated we are. Auschwitz is a compelling witness to this.

THIS ISSUE OF *Sojourners* celebrates the life and witness of Daniel Berrigan, a Jesuit priest renowned for his untiring work on behalf of peace who, as I explain in "The Unchained Life of Daniel Berrigan" (page 16), has been a close friend and mentor for me and for our work here at *Sojourners*.

Likewise Graham, who will be 98 years old this fall, has been an important figure in my life and career. Ever since meeting him in the early days of *Sojourners'* ministry, I found him to be not only gracious and warm, but also a bridge-builder and encourager, and a steady supporter of *Sojourners'* work for peace and justice, which he called "complementary" to his mission of personal evangelism. Graham has always been a lifelong learner, passionate about preaching the gospel but always ready to understand more about what that gospel means in the world. It was never surprising to me that this Southern-born-and-raised American evangelist decided early on to insist on preaching only to racially integrated coliseums and crusades, when many others just went along with their culture.

But perhaps the most surprising

position Graham took, which was at odds with many evangelicals of the time, was his change of heart about nuclear weapons.

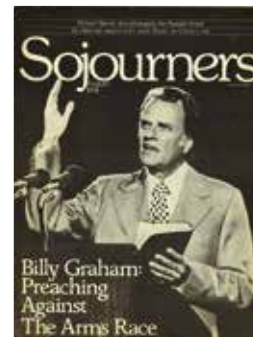
As one might expect when talking about Billy Graham, scripture was at the heart of what led to his "conversion" to peacemaking. "I have gone back to the Bible to restudy what it says about the responsibilities we have as peacemakers," Graham said. "I have seen that we must seek the good of the whole human race, and not just the good of any one nation or race." He added, "Is it [God's] will that resources be used for massive armaments that could otherwise be used for alleviating human suffering and hunger? Of course not. Our world has lost sight of true values and substituted false gods and false values."

Graham talked about the unique role that Christians are called to play. "I believe that the Christian especially has a responsibility to work for peace in our world," Graham said. "Christians may well find themselves working and agreeing with non-believers on an issue like peace. But our motives will not be identical." And the goal, as he saw it, was the "total destruction of nuclear arms."

Graham told us in that 1979 conversation, "I honestly wish we had never developed nuclear weapons. But of course that is water under the bridge. We have nuclear weapons in horrifying quantities, and the question is, what are we going to do about it?"

That's still the question for Christians today. ■

Jim Wallis is editor-in-chief of Sojourners magazine.





Not One More

Thousands of Americans, including those in front of the Milwaukee Art Museum, above, wore orange on National Gun Violence Awareness Day on June 2 to call for meaningful gun-safety legislation. Less than two weeks later, 49 people were killed and more than 50 injured when a man armed with legally obtained, high-capacity weapons opened fire in a gay dance club in Orlando. "We need to examine ourselves, individually and as a church, to acknowledge the ways we have divided and have been divided," said Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in response to the massacre. "We must stand with people who have been 'othered.'"

By Conrad Martin

The Shell Game

Global financial secrecy makes for deadly, dirty business.

THE PANAMA PAPERS was the largest information leak in history. Revelations continue to unfold about how one Panamanian law firm, Mossack Fonseca, used anonymous shell companies to help its clients avoid taxes and scrutiny from law enforcement. These shell companies are created on paper and don't disclose their true owners.

The Panama Papers scandal isn't just about taxes. It's about conflict, corruption, war, and human trafficking. It's about whether or not our financial system will fuel conflict and instability around the world. If we think this is an "offshore" problem, then we are deeply mistaken. This is very much a U.S. problem. Americans don't need to go to Panama to hide their money because they can do it here at home.

To paraphrase one analyst: The world's largest financial secrecy jurisdictions *are*

in fact islands, but not the islands we think of when we think of tax havens. They are the islands of the United Kingdom and the island of Manhattan.

It isn't difficult to set up this type of company in the U.S., particularly in states

Americans don't need to go to Panama to hide their money because they can do it here at home.

such as Delaware and Nevada where financial secrecy is widespread. Currently no U.S. states require that these shell companies disclose the identity of their owners. Legislation in Congress—the Incorporation Transparency and Law Enforcement Assistance Act, which is supported by several religious organizations—could change that by giving law enforcement access to

owner information. Shell companies have facilitated human trafficking, terrorism, weapons trafficking, and drug running. Jubilee USA notes that some U.S.-based shell companies are used to steal from the poor. One case Jubilee USA cites is that of

the son of Equatorial Guinea's dictator, who used U.S.-based anonymous companies to steal money from his starving people and to buy a mansion in Malibu, Calif., among other extravagances.

WHEN IT COMES to conflict and war, financial secrecy is deadly. For example, U.S.-based anonymous shell companies

Our Mission

The mission of *Sojourners* magazine is to inspire hope and action by articulating the biblical call to racial and social justice, life and peace, and environmental stewardship.

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enabled weapons dealer Viktor Bout to funnel arms to both sides of conflicts around the world. Shell companies were used to fuel Sierra Leone's civil war and to fund a violent Mexican drug cartel.

Anonymous companies also are a powerful sanctions-busting tool for officials in odious regimes. If we want to stop conflict through peaceful means and avoid punitive sanctions that impact entire populations, those types of targeted sanctions on individuals are critical. But they are rendered ineffective when those individuals can simply set up fake companies to hide assets and criminal activity.

These crimes disproportionately impact some of the world's poorest people, according to Jubilee USA's executive director, Eric LeCompte. "It's too often the most vulnerable

who are most impacted by the crime, tax evasion, and corruption facilitated by some of these shell companies," he said.

Congress is getting the message. In April, faith leaders and small business owners descended on Capitol Hill to urge Congress to pass the transparency legislation, and support among members of Congress is growing.

Conflict, corruption, war, tax evasion, and human trafficking—these issues are intertwined with global financial secrecy. Financial transparency is a factor in whether our children will live in a more peaceful, secure world. ■

Conrad Martin is executive director of the Fund for Constitutional Government, based in Washington, D.C.

By Beatrice Fihn

A 'Moral Revolution' Against Nukes

It's impossible to eliminate nuclear weapons and "upgrade" them at the same time.

THE INTERNATIONAL community has agreed that nuclear weapons should be eliminated, and the rhetoric surrounding these weapons sounds promising at times, but little has been achieved to reach a world free of nuclear weapons.

President Obama is the first sitting U.S. president to visit Hiroshima, Japan, the site of the first nuclear weapon used in war, and his speech there in May was beautifully crafted, highlighting his personal commitment to this issue. However, his words haven't matched his actions as president.

Not only have the U.S. and other nuclear-armed states failed to fulfill their commitments to nuclear disarmament, but each is currently pursuing enormously expensive upgrades and modernization programs. These countries are developing new, more-modern nuclear weapons and delivery systems, extending the planned possession of nuclear weapons for decades to come.

Twenty-five years after the end of the Cold War, more than 15,000 nuclear weapons still exist. Nine nations still possess them: the U.S. and Russia have 93 percent of the world's nuclear warheads, followed by China, the United Kingdom, France, India, Pakistan, Israel, and North Korea. Many

more states, such as all NATO members, together with Australia, Japan, and South Korea, are part of extended nuclear deterrence agreements—some even stationing nuclear weapons on their territory.

By allowing such a large number of nuclear weapons to remain, the risk of an accident increases. Nearly 1,800 nuclear warheads are kept on high alert, ready to launch within minutes. New research paints a worrying picture of near misses, security breaches, and other events that could cause catastrophe. Some say that the risk of a nuclear detonation is higher today than at the end of the Cold War.

IN HIROSHIMA, Obama called for a "moral revolution" in order to reach a world free of nuclear weapons. But such a moral revolution will not be led by those who possess these weapons of mass destruction. Instead, the world is witnessing a surge in leadership from around the globe. A new focus on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons has emerged that looks at these weapons for what they are: indiscriminate, inhumane, and unacceptable.

This humanitarian initiative is an innovative effort for nuclear disarmament, led

From the Archives

July-August 1995

To the Public Square

CAN THE words “Christian” or “faith” appear in proximity to political issues? And if they do, what should they mean? On May 23, a delegation of U.S. Christian leaders came to Washington, D.C., to proclaim to the press and the country’s political leadership that yes, faith and values are vital to the public life—and if they are genuinely expressed they should transform our discourse, policy, and social fabric. What true biblical faith doesn’t do is let religious conviction be manipulated by partisan politics.

“America is fed up with what many in the church are doing, polarizing us into Left and Right. Christians are called to a politics of reconciliation,” said Tony Campolo at a press conference held that morning. ...

For people of faith, a non-negotiable biblical concern is the call to speak on behalf of the poor, not the powerful, to demand justice as well as righteousness. “All Christians need to pray for discernment,” said [Rev. James] Forbes. “If your agenda is in conflict with Jesus, who proclaimed, ‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because God has anointed me to bring good news to the poor,’ then we need to heed Isaiah’s instructions, ‘Come let us reason together.’” ...

If we are to live out a prophetic faith, then the poor will be more important than power, the way we talk together will be as important as what party we vote for, and compassion and service will shape our lives. ■

Julie Polter is on the Sojourners editorial staff.



by non-nuclear weapon states, international organizations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross, civil society movements such as International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, and prominent moral authorities such as the pope.

Any use of nuclear weapons would create a wide-scale humanitarian emergency. As of June, 127 states have endorsed a “Humanitarian Pledge”—a commitment to prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons.

In May, at the newly established U.N. working group on nuclear disarmament, a majority of countries in the world declared themselves ready to start negotiations on a new treaty prohibiting these weapons. The U.N. General Assembly this fall will be an important opportunity to launch the negotiations. Civil society, including churches and other faith-based communities, needs to call upon governments to renounce the immoral doctrine of deterrence and support the immediate negotiation of such a treaty.

Such a treaty could be negotiated even

without the participation of nuclear-armed states. It would still have strong impact by delegitimizing nuclear weapons, building additional pressure on nuclear-armed states to disarm, and providing concrete steps to reduce the reliance on nuclear weapons in military alliances such as NATO. It would signal that nuclear weapons are considered unacceptable by the majority of the world and could start that moral revolution that President Obama called for.

Eliminating nuclear weapons is a task for people all over the world, not just a few selected states. We all have a duty, and a right, to work together toward this goal. The push for a treaty banning nuclear weapons is motivated by a fervent desire to ensure that no one else ever suffers, as the people in Hiroshima and Nagasaki did, from these despicable weapons. ■

Beatrice Fihn is executive director of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, based in Geneva.

By Barry Hudock

Religious Freedom or Culture War?

Some who decry threats to “liberty” seem to have a partisan agenda.

PROVIDING A definition of religious freedom is fairly easy: Every human person has a right to believe, to pray, to worship in community, and to practice her faith according to her conscience. And it’s just as easy to get Americans to agree that religious freedom is an important, even crucial, element of a healthy society. But ask what it means to respect this human right and where it’s being violated, and you quickly find yourself in the weeds of rancorous debate.

On the one hand, conservative Christians have raised religious freedom alarms in the U.S. Television personalities David and Jason Benham, for instance, cite such concerns in their objections to ordinances allowing transgender people to use bathrooms that correspond with the gender with which they identify; a *National Review* columnist wrote that such policies “would render religious liberty permanently subordinate to the interests and demands of LGBT activists.”

Does sharing a bathroom with a transgendered person infringe upon the consciences

of those who consider transgender identity a threat? And even if it does, does the state’s role in protecting the rights and dignity of *all* citizens sharply relativize this concern? Are the questions perhaps more complex than our binary culture wars suggest?

Or consider: For five years, critics of the mandate of contraceptive coverage by employer health plans under the Affordable Care Act have insisted that the policy violates religious freedom. Several businesses and organizations—Hobby Lobby, the Little Sisters of the Poor, and more—have sued the federal government on the point. And despite its decades-long advocacy of universal health coverage, the U.S. bishops’ conference initiated an annual “Fortnight for Freedom” observance that even some allies find inappropriately partisan.

Some who gnash their teeth over these issues seem unconcerned about other offenses to religious freedom. They said little, for example, about state government efforts to interfere with Christian ministry

to migrants and refugees. Indiana Gov. Mike Pence not only withdrew his state's help to Syrian refugees trying to escape a historic humanitarian crisis, he also tried to convince the archdiocese of Indianapolis to cease its ministry to them.

Additionally, public figures have called for a complete ban on Muslims entering the United States, based solely on their religion. The silence from most conservatives who otherwise crow constantly about religious liberty threats has been deafening.

TO BE FAIR, some Catholic leaders have been vocal about these latter threats as well. Archbishop Joseph Tobin of Indianapolis blatantly defied Pence on the refugee issue.

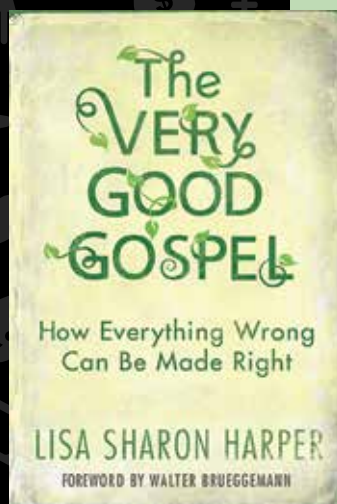
Most of these problems pale in comparison to threats to religious freedom faced by people elsewhere in the world.

And the bishop of Brooklyn, Nicholas DiMarzio, recently criticized "racist and xenophobic tendencies" in America today. "As human beings," he wrote, undocumented immigrants "cannot be 'illegal.'"

Finally, it would be irresponsible not to recall here that most of these problems pale in comparison to threats to religious freedom faced by people elsewhere in the world. Ancient Christian communities in northern Iraq and the Holy Land have been decimated. Muslims in Iran and Saudi Arabia who question their own faith in public face prison. Both Muslims and Christians in Burma endure violence from Buddhist militants. In Pakistan, lawyers have been assassinated for defending Christians in court. Religious minorities in Sri Lanka, Egypt, Bangladesh, Indonesia, and Nigeria find their governments looking the other way when they are threatened or attacked.

Not all threats to religious freedom are created equal. ■

Barry Hudock is author of Struggle, Condemnation, and Vindication: John Courtney Murray's Journey toward Vatican II.



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The Very Good Gospel author
Lisa Sharon Harper

A THEOLOGY OF JUSTICE
INITIATIVE FROM

sojourners

NEWS



Shehan Jeyarajah

Earlier this year, more than 200 Baylor students, alumni, faculty, and staff gathered on the university campus to honor the community's sexual assault survivors.

Failure at Every Level

Baylor University, the largest Baptist university in the world, made headlines recently after an investigation found that for years the school failed to properly followup on reports of sexual assault, amid a "broader culture and belief by many administrators that sexual violence 'doesn't happen here.'" Survivors characterized the administration's failure as "willful ignorance."

For more news and ongoing analysis, visit sojo.net/baylor

QUOTED

“Our voices are critiqued for pitch and vocal fry. Our hairstyle is regulated more ardently than our theology.”

—Layton Williams

on the struggles of young clergywomen
sojo.net/pastorbody

PHOTOS

All the Likes

For a behind-the-scenes look at Sojourners, including our favorite quotes, a preview of upcoming issues, a peek into our archives, and an occasional #tbt featuring the early days of Sojourners (and Jim Wallis' beard), find us on Instagram @sojogram.



"We're not sure if emoji scripture will stand the test of time, but we'll always be fans of Micah 6:8. If you haven't heard ...

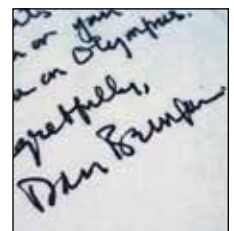
an anonymous author released a new translation of the Bible ... in emojis."

"Pre-Sojourners we were *The Post American*. We're loving these old issues editorial assistant Oliva Whitener found in the office today. Any guesses on how much a subscription cost in 1973?"

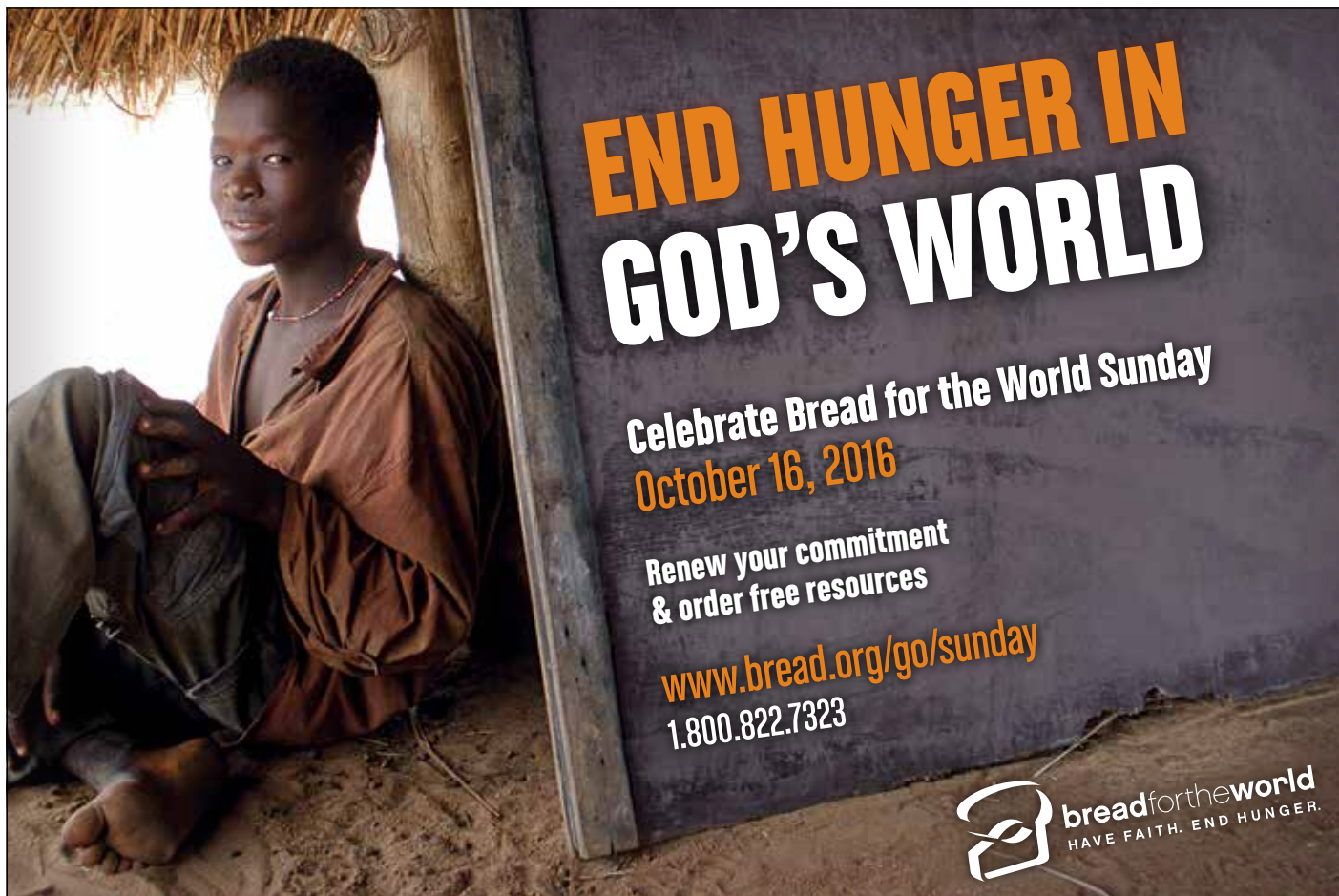


"Buttons peruses the June 2013 issue of *Sojourners*. He loves the #AmishFever feature."

"While digging around in the Sojo archives this morning, we found this 1988 postcard from Jesuit priest, peace activist, and poet Daniel Berrigan."



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THINGS NOT SEEN

Conversations about
Culture and Faith



Produced in partnership with the **Chicago Sunday Evening Club**
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**CHICAGO SUNDAY
EVENING CLUB**

Roots of Freedom

THE NATION'S FIRST blockbuster television miniseries, *Roots*, shocked the nation when it started airing on Jan. 23, 1977. Based on Alex Haley's research on his own family's story and adapted for television from Haley's novel, *Roots* offered the world its first cinematic depiction of Africa and Africans unfiltered through the conduit of Hollywood's racialized imagination. White Tarzan and Jane were nowhere to be found in Juffure, Gambia. Kunta Kinte was the leading man. Fanta was his ingénue—black ... and beautiful.

For eight nights the Kinte family unfolded from generation to generation, focused on individual family members' struggles against generations of evil white slave masters.

But the 2016 "reimagined" version of *Roots* places the snatched descendants of Omoro and Binta Kinte squarely within the unyielding machine of the international slave trade—an economic system that,



From the 2016 *Roots*

It didn't take long for Plato's copper and gold to morph into Virginia judicial law that delineated between slaves and servants based on skin color. Colonial "races" became white, black, and red.

The Western market extracted millions of people—each one of them created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26)—from African nations throughout western and central Africa and a half million from southeast Africa. Some researchers estimate that more than 12 million "images of God" were ensnared in the Atlantic trade alone between the 16th and 19th century. According to the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database, 1.5 million images of God were erased by the Middle Passage on ships bound for the Americas. Another 10.5 million were hauled to the Americas (450,000 of them to the U.S.). The vast majority were sold and enslaved in South America and the Caribbean islands—almost 5 million in Brazil alone. Six million more were sold in Asia, and 8 million within Africa.

In one of the most poignant moments in the reimagined four-part series, Kunta Kinte is chained to the back of a wagon, rolling through the Virginia countryside. In his first moments in the colonies, he looks over the hillsides peppered with people of African descent and wonders aloud: "So many of them. ... Why

don't they run?" My jaw dropped. "They can't," I thought. "They are living inside of the machine."

FIFTEEN GENERATIONS after Kunta Kinte—after the Civil War and reconstruction and Jim Crow and Birmingham and Selma and "black is beautiful" and mass incarceration and #BlackLivesMatter—15 generations later, I had a conversation that dropped my jaw again.

I recently met a woman named Charo Mina-Rojas at the Carter Center Forum on Women, Religion, Violence, and Power. Mina-Rojas is a Colombian of African descent. She said people of African descent must reclaim our ethnic heritage and cast off racial categorizations. I advocate the same in my book *The Very Good Gospel*. I call those considered black and white to forsake racial categories and return to ethnic identity, which is not a human-made construct. Ethnicity is true—created by God.

What would Kunta Kinte think today? I believe he would be proud of the current descendants of Africa and the Middle Passage. We are finally breaking free from the last rusty vestiges of the global slave trade—the slavery of the mind. ■

Lisa Sharon Harper is Sojourners' chief church engagement officer and author of The Very Good Gospel (June 2016).



What would Kunta Kinte think today? He would be proud.

fundamentally, sought the well-being of European nations at the expense of the rest of the world.

In 380 B.C.E., Plato articulated a grand idea in his treatise *The Republic*. There is this thing called "race," he posited. Race is determined by the kind of metal a person is made of, he said: silver, gold, iron, or copper. A person's race determines how that person serves society.

The transatlantic slave trade took Plato's notion and expanded the "republic" to encompass the world. Guided by Western philosophers' notions of human hierarchy, Western popes and monarchs declared the right of Europeans to enslave "uncivilized" peoples for the benefit of the crown.

A row of matches with the first one lit, set against a dark red background. The flame is bright yellow and orange, and the matchstick is dark. The other matches are unlit and have red tips.

How has Sojourners **INSPIRED YOU?**

Perhaps you've been inspired to work for racial justice in your community after reading Jim Wallis' new book, ***America's Original Sin***. Maybe you've found a new way to understand and talk about your faith. Or perhaps the biblical call to social justice has become foundational to your values.

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*"We could not,
so help us God,
do otherwise."*

**Dan Berrigan's
prophetic
peacemaking offers
an inspiration and
a challenge for all
of us committed
to a transforming
life of faith.**

by **JIM WALLIS**

The Unchained Life of Daniel Berrigan

When we lose a Christian peacemaker such as Daniel Berrigan, as we did in April, it gets very personal for many of us. Berrigan shaped and motivated a Catholic peace movement that became a fundamental and foundational influence on Sojourners and on me personally.

During my early years at Michigan State University, friends were drafted, others feared they would be next, and the Vietnam War consumed the attention of an entire generation. Then I learned about Daniel and Philip Berrigan and the small group of Christian protesters they were inciting. They were the only Christians I had heard about who were against the war in Vietnam.

Here were some Christians who were saying and doing what I thought the gospel said—and what nobody in my white evangelical world was saying or doing. The witness of the Berrigans helped keep my hope for faith from dying altogether. African-American Christians fighting for justice and that "Berrigan handful" of Christians fighting for peace paved the way for my return to faith.

Daniel and Philip Berrigan rose to national prominence after they and seven others burned 378 draft files with homemade napalm taken from a draft-board office in Catonsville, Md., on May 17, 1968. The result was jail sentences for the group and, eventually, Daniel's play "The Trial of the Catonsville Nine."

Daniel famously went underground after the sentencing. *Life* magazine described his August 1970 arrest on Block Island, R.I., where he was hiding at the home of his friend William Stringfellow. "On an ominous morning in August, with a fierce nor'easter blowing up black clouds and spattering rain over the harbor, Daniel Berrigan lay asleep in a manger [a little shed outside the house, which Stringfellow called "Eschaton"] on

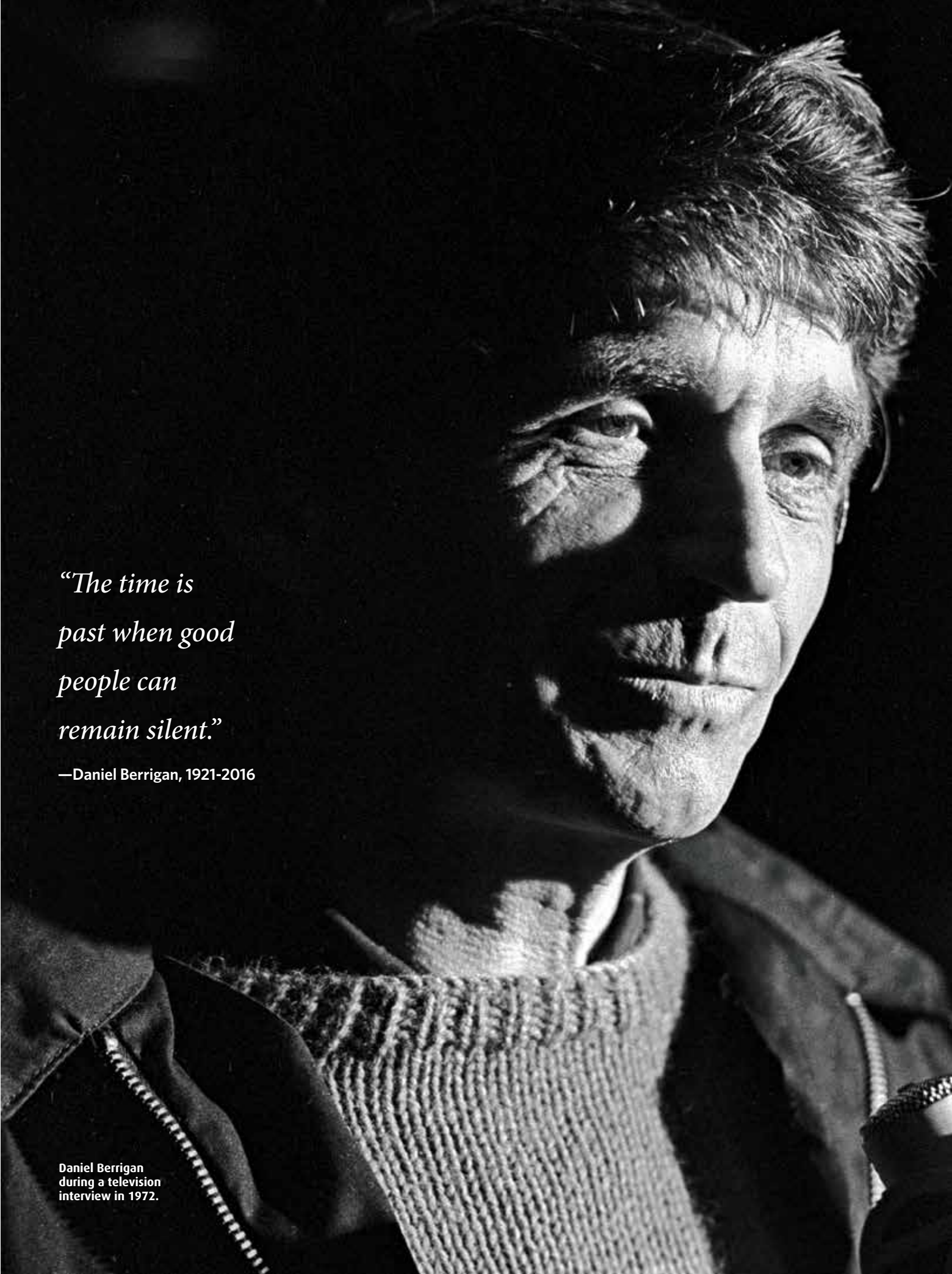
Block Island, R.I.," wrote Lee Lockwood in the May 21, 1971 edition of *Life*. FBI agents, posing as birdwatchers on the island, apprehended Dan and took him off to a facility in Danbury, Conn., to which he had been given a three-year sentence. When Stringfellow was asked about his own potential prosecution for harboring a federal fugitive, he said, "I don't fear persecution. I know we are in jeopardy, but everyone in this country is in jeopardy."

The Stringfellow house and Berrigan cottage were to become my primary retreat and only vacation destination in the years to follow, and the place where Dan and I had our most personal conversations—on long walks along the beach or paths around the island, or on his porch overlooking the Atlantic. I remember many a long meal with Bill and Dan, around Bill's dining room table or at the cottage, for some of the best theological and political conversations of my life. Dan, members of his family, and personal friends came to that cottage for years after Bill died, and it became a sacred space for many of us. I even proposed to my wife, Joy Carroll, on Block Island, and we have taken our two boys there regularly for many years.

Called to be peacemakers

I was always grateful for the way Daniel Berrigan consistently made the connections between peace and justice. In his testimony at the Catonsville trial, he said, "Our apologies, good friends, for the fracture of good order, the

Photos by Bob Fitch/Stanford University Libraries

A high-contrast, black and white close-up portrait of Daniel Berrigan. He is looking slightly to the right with a thoughtful expression. The lighting is dramatic, with deep shadows on the left side of his face and forehead, and highlights on the right side of his face, nose, and hair. He is wearing a dark jacket over a light-colored, textured sweater.

*“The time is
past when good
people can
remain silent.”*

—Daniel Berrigan, 1921-2016

Daniel Berrigan
during a television
interview in 1972.



Below, Daniel Berrigan, a Jesuit priest, speaking against the Vietnam War in 1972.

burning of paper instead of children, the angering of the orderlies in the front parlor of the charnel house. We could not, so help us God, do otherwise. ... The time is past when good [people] can remain silent, when obedience can segregate [people] from public risk, when the poor can die without defense.”

This is where the vocation of Daniel Berrigan becomes clear. His critics often accused him of disorderliness, creating drama, and causing discomfort—all of which were true. That’s because Dan was not only a priest and poet, he was a prophet, in the biblical tradition of those who caused such trouble on behalf of what they believed God was trying to say to us. It is in that prophetic tradition that Sojourners has tried to stand—and Dan, for all his controversy and confrontational style, has helped us to stand there. Whether we were Catholic or evangelical or anything else, Dan always gave us comfort, encouragement, support, and courage.

One of Daniel Berrigan’s most prophetic challenges was addressed to those of us who believe we are called to be Christian peacemakers. It’s a quote from his book *No Bars to Manhood* about the cost of peacemaking vs. the cost of war-making—and the observation that war-makers are usually willing to pay a higher cost for war than we peacemakers are willing to make for peace. His prophetic words remain with us:

“We cry peace and cry peace, and there is no peace. There is no peace because there are no peacemakers. There are no makers of peace because the making of peace is at least as costly as the making of war—at least as exigent, at least as disruptive, at least as liable to bring disgrace and prison and death in its wake.” ■

Jim Wallis is editor-in-chief of Sojourners magazine.



Daniel Lewis/New York Times/Redux

‘May You Live Beloved and Wise’

Early, so early, my uncle began my instruction in death as a part of life.

by FRIDA BERRIGAN

When I was born—the first child of Dan Berrigan’s brother Phil and Elizabeth McAlister—my uncle sent my parents a sheaf of poetry. On it, he wrote a note: “Dears, I send these with trepidation. They are uneven; but then so is life, no? Love, Daniel.”

My parents put the dozen or so poems in a book and gave them to me on my eighth birthday with their own note: “We don’t expect you to understand all of them yet but you can now begin to read and grow with them.” *Yet.* Right. I am now 34 years older than I was when I first opened the little red bound book of handwritten poems, and I don’t understand them any better.

But now that my dearest Unka has passed from this world, I hold on tight to this collection and try really hard to understand. It is going to be tough. The poems are full of words the dictionary either fails to define or further confuses—supramundane, Blake’s child, Dante’s paradise (what are boys from middle school doing in Unka’s poetry?), “the bodhisattva is neither stuporous nor sleek / he is crucified.”

Fragments of these poems cycle through my head all the time, a sort of back rhythm to daily life, especially when that daily life was graced with Unka.

Uncle Dan and I would walk—down New York City’s Broadway and through Riverside Park. He breathed in such love for the natural world, even amid the Upper West Side’s hustles and bumps. He saw everything, and found the beauty that was there. The only people that made him mad were delivery men riding bikes

All the poems involve his meditations on the life I will live after he leaves.

on the sidewalks—he had been knocked down once by them and he worried about the elderly—and people who lost themselves in their phones.

Uncle Dan and I would drive—across old Route 17 through the mountains to Syracuse, N.Y., passing Liberty and Deposit along the way. He would exhale in delight at the rock walls crusted in ice or a hillside in full autumn splendor. He would laugh at self-storage parks and new shopping mall construction—“America,” we’d chuckle, “so hard to find and never finished.”

America *is* hard to find. We were a home for our peripatetic uncle—Baltimore and Syracuse (and Eschaton on Block Island). My dad wrote to his brother on Easter Sunday, 1974, when I was two weeks old. He describes anti-war actions in Washington, D.C., and then: “Frida Danielle thrives and sends you burps and chortles of love. She is somewhere near 11 lbs. already. I’ll save some space for Liz while assuring you of love and peace, all of which the Savior promises us. Peace be with you, and to our friends. Be well and care for yourself. We love you.”

I am struck—reading his poems again as I mourn my Unka, as I ache with missing him, as I cling to these poems as part of him and as evidence that he loved me—how he began my instruction in death as a part of life early, so early. All the poems refer to death, revolve around death, involve his meditations on the life I will live after he leaves.

*May you live, cry the birds
beloved, wise, and die
sustained by those you sustained
your memory a stigma
pressed like a birthmark
on the tissue of the living
trees; she harmed no one of us
children; we bear her name.*

Unka, it is a testament to your life that this poem you wrote for me 42 years ago could serve as an epitaph for you. Trees, you marveled at each one. Children, countless (including me), bear your name. ■

Frida Berrigan writes the *Little Insurrections* blog for *Waging Nonviolence*, is the author of *It Runs in the Family: On Being Raised by Radicals and Growing into Rebellious Motherhood* (OR Books, 2015), and lives with her family in New London, Conn.



At left, Daniel Berrigan under FBI escort following his arrest for the Catonsville Nine actions. Below, Dorothy Day and Berrigan at an anti-war meeting in the 1970s. Bottom, Frida Berrigan demonstrating at an early age that it runs in the family.



Getty Images





Do Not Be Ruled by Fear, but Faith

'Doctors of the Church' Daniel and Philip Berrigan offer us a great service—if we have the ears to hear • by STEPHEN KELLY

In the story of Lazarus, told in John's gospel, seemingly Jesus arrives too late. Humanity, doomed like Lazarus, is sealed under two tons of stone. Is this then an inspired picture of how God sees us? Humanity sealed up in death? Death taunting Jesus until Jesus has a visceral reaction? The hand of death moves the chess piece toward checkmate.

The complexity of the lie goes: "Once you are dead, once afraid, how will God guide you?" If afraid, how can one obey the guidance, dependence on the one who sent him?

"Greater love has no one than to lay down one's life for a friend." So God does know what it's like to encounter death's whiplash version. Always, everywhere, each time, each encounter, risks are included.

Jesus went the distance in this anguishing scene. To see him at work is to see life itself overcoming death, because he, as a human being, cooperated, obeyed the guidance of the one who sent him. He loved, he lays down his life.

Now there is a different moral power in town. God is going to crack death's veneer, a chink in the armor. Through Jesus' obedience, the crumbling begins, and the hidden, insipid hold of death is broken.

Just as Jesus' power over death reaches a peak in our story, there is one final quarter to be heard from. An assent is awaited. Jesus is asking for the nod from friends, our willingness to remove obstacles to faith, a hurdle to overtake. Will the friends of Lazarus allow this? Will they roll away the stone? The first impediment holds up the scene: "You're gonna embarrass us all with a stench!"

Jesus insists, to put it mildly: "Believe; do not be ruled by fear, but faith."

Are we to remain asleep?

What of the faith of Daniel Berrigan? Did he hear in his inner recesses the call to come forth? Did Philip, his brother, another one who awakened to Christ's voice, help unbind him from the trappings, the ensnaring bonds, the lure of prestige, credibility? I heard it expounded by Phil, 23 years ago, quoting aptly the poet Julia Esquivel: "They have threatened us with Resurrection" for acting on behalf of others.

Daniel, at Fordham in the beginning of the '80s, reached out with the experience of those embodying plowshares: "We want to test the resurrection in our bones. To see if we might live in hope."

Daniel and Phil's lives asked, in their respective ways:

Are we to remain in a catatonic stupor, asleep, drunk, unconscious, or in flat-lined existence? In these United States of Amnesia? Will we arrive at perdition, dominion of death, with our freedom never used, intact? What good is it if paralyzed in fear? Liberated, but not loving.

In prophetic diagnosis, and in concert with many faiths, Daniel and Phil exposed the historical alliance of the religious leaders, those appointed pastors, colluding with structures of domination. Bomb-blessing has no place in Jesus' self-giving.

The imperial power of Pax Romana ran aground on the shoals of Christian steadfastness. But through the centuries, what was an intimate circle of outcasts and martyrs dissembled and gained in ascendancy the power it was meant to resist. The power that had to be faced.

Daniel and Phil untied, illegally, those called forth from out of power's captivity, power's

The Berrigan brothers
Dan, left, and Phil.



confines. They risked the retaliation of those beholden to death's sway. They touched the idol of the state. Inspired, they, and other draft board raiders, retrieved the place and pre-eminence of the conscientious objector as imitating the love of Christ. In gospel coloring, Phil and Daniel took the inductees' places.

I'm most interested in Dan and Phil Berrigan as Doctors of the Church, as they retrieved for the people of God a move from preoccupation with orthodoxy to orthopraxis. A great service to us, just sayin'. ■

Stephen Kelly, SJ, a Jesuit priest and peacemaker, spent six years in prison for hammering on D-5 Trident missiles and other "plowshares" actions. This is adapted from the homily he gave at Dan Berrigan's May 6 funeral Mass in New York City.

"We want to test the resurrection in our bones. To see if we might live in hope."



Dan Berrigan at a candlelight support rally for the Catonsville Nine outside the Baltimore Federal Courthouse.

We Die Before We Live

For Dan Berrigan, to 'proclaim the resurrection in word and act is an affront that the State cannot tolerate.'

by **BILL WYLIE-KELLERMANN**

I once had a conversation with Dan about his death. We were talking late into the night at the Block Island hermitage that his friends William Stringfellow and Anthony Towne had built for him while he was two years in Danbury federal prison, a consequence of the 1968 Catonsville draft board action. He had by then foresworn scotch, on doctor's orders, so I was being introduced to Manhattans dry, which were somehow allowed. The place suited the topic. On the wall above us was an exorcism poem that he'd hand-lettered in a style familiar to Catholic Worker and resistance houses across the country.

I'm certain it was I who broached the topic. When we met in the early '70s, it was in the wake of notorious assassinations: Medgar Evers and Viola Liuzzo, the Panthers, Malcolm, King, the Kennedys. There was a certain youthful grandiosity in imagining that he or others who were such troublesome peacemakers would be similarly targeted. I braced my heart. I told him so. (Then he turns around and lives, thanks be, to 94!)

I probably mentioned Bonhoeffer or King and the way the blood of the martyrs is seed of movement or church, even yearning secretly myself for some sort of "meaningful death." He gently countered with Albert Camus' good life and the absurd car crash of Camus' dying. So, I was as much chastened as honored when he committed the conversation to poetry:

*Drinking one night, Kellermann and I
talked the moon down, 'Think of mad racers
we're at the mercy of
And stuttering engines of air craft
so high the guardian angels peel away—
Then street knifings. And bloody so on.
It's certain we exist
courtesy of bellicose junkers, by merest
suffrance.'
Significant death?
Gold leaf of history, cosmetic
on a split skull.*

Preparing for resistance

Our last conversation, less than a year ago, was partly about Dietrich Bonhoeffer again. The new Charles Marsh biography was out, so honest and revealing. He'd not heard tell.



It was on the 25th anniversary of Bonhoeffer's death by hanging in the Nazi concentration camp in Flossenbürg that Berrigan went underground in 1970, refusing to submit voluntarily to unjust imprisonment. That day he began a poetic review of Eberhard Bethge's elephantine Bonhoeffer biography just out, which was published in *Saturday Review*. Such publication was maddening to FBI director J. Edgar Hoover. Like other initiatives—popping up to preach in a prominent pulpit or appearing on network television and then skipping out the back door—it improvised a nation of safe houses and kept Berrigan on the Most Wanted list.

In the review, Berrigan quoted Bonhoeffer: "I am working with all my might for church resistance. But it is perfectly clear to me that *this* resistance is only a temporary and transitional phase that will lead on to opposition of a quite different kind. ... pray with us that it will be a 'resistance unto death,' and that people will be found to suffer it."

Berrigan wrote: "To the question of whether the church should connive with the state in the suppression, deportation, and murder of the Jews, he proposed a concrete answer: the formation at Finkenwalde, in 1936, of a [community] of young seminarians, to engage in study, discipline, and prayer, and (in the event, only known afterward) to prepare for resistance and death."

When the FBI, disguised as birdwatchers, caught up with Daniel on Block Island four months later, it was this very topic that he and William Stringfellow were discussing. Could such a seminary take form on U.S. soil in a different moment? Though they took this up again in earnest after Berrigan's release from prison, it would be wrong to think imprisonment was an interruption of some sort. Instead, it was the immediate tryout behind bars. Pulling together a circle of draft resisters and conventional felons, Dan convened a group for study, discipline, and prayer, which eventually busted out upon the world. And only then would a group of us at Union Seminary be drawn into its next version.

While at Danbury prison, Berrigan wrote "A Letter to the Vietnamese." A long and little-known poem, I've no doubt it was delivered to its intended by way of Thich Nhat Hanh, the Vietnamese Zen monk, then exiled in Paris. I once memorized it entire, and the last line still haunts my conscience: "It is snowing tonight as I vigil, the first white fall of winter. I think on the fevers and horrors of Con Son. No to their No. YES to all else."

A refusal to look away

Death, the great No with a capital N, riddles the culture. How does one say No and also Yes?

One way, of course, is the invention of liturgical direct action and its consequences. Ritually damaging nuclear warheads in such as the 1980 Plowshares actions or, before that, the draft board raids like Catonsville, burning the files with homemade napalm. Dorothy Day, addressing the liturgical conference, called the latter an "act of prayer," and Stringfellow termed it "a politically informed exorcism." A Yes in the form of a No.

While still a fugitive, Daniel Berrigan spoke to more than 15,000 students and others during the April 1970 "America Is Hard to Find" event at Cornell University. He was arrested four months later. Below, Berrigan (right) and his brother Phil burn draft records in Catonsville, Md.





Dorothy Day called the Catonsville protest an “act of prayer.”

But side by side with these, Dan ministered to the dying. Like Camus’ doctor in *The Plague*, he tended victims while saying No to the executioners. In the ’80s, he sat to the end with AIDS patients, the untouchables ravaged by both disease and culture. I got notes from him on cards depicting Christ crucified by AIDS. In *Sorrow Built a Bridge*, he recounted, eyes wide open with love, their crossings over.

Earlier, he had done the same at a hospice for the dying in Manhattan—specifically, poor folks with cancer. Berrigan also told their stories. *We Die Before We Live* (he thought the order important) collects vignettes, their ways and faces.

Dan had been led to the hospice by a young Catholic Worker serving there as an orderly. I suggest a further Worker influence. Going back to the days of Dorothy Day, the New York *Catholic Worker* newspaper had a practice of eulogizing guests who would ordinarily cross over in the silence of blank and nameless obscurity. Sizing up characters fit for a Dickens novel, these descriptions could be funny, heroic, quirky, but above all honest and loving. I always read them. And I know the style crept into my own approach to doing funeral liturgy.

The politics of resurrection

In the wake of Berrigan’s arrest on Block Island, Stringfellow took recourse to the book of Acts, specifically the arrest of the apostles for healing the disabled beggar and for preaching the resurrection. It was the latter which so caught his attention. He read it and read it. What could “resurrection from the dead” mean if it were cause for arrest and imprisonment? Stringfellow eventually employed this text for a sermon called “An Authority Over Death.”

The preaching of the resurrection, far from being politically innocuous, and the healing incidents, instead of being merely private, are profound, even cosmic, political acts. ... I do not imply that Berrigan is engaged in some self-conscious imitation of Peter or John or any other of the earlier Christians; I simply mean that to proclaim the resurrection in word and act is an affront which the State cannot tolerate because the resurrection exposes the subservience of the State to death as the moral purpose of the society.

Indeed. Daniel Berrigan enjoyed and exercised that freedom.

The night of our conversation about death, there was not yet a plaque of Dan’s design on the wall behind us, but there soon would be. In spring 1986, we moved Anthony’s ashes and joined them with Bill’s beside the stone wall of the cottage. The plaque was a testimony terse: “Near this house the remains of William Stringfellow and Anthony Towne await the resurrection, Alleluia.”

Now Dan’s remains in earth, like his remains in us, anticipate that same freedom. ■

Bill Wylie-Kellermann, a Sojourners contributing editor, is a pastor and community activist in Detroit. His most recent book is William Stringfellow: Essential Writings; his next forthcoming is Where the Waters Go Round: Beloved Detroit (Wipf and Stock).



Making the Crooked Way Straight

Dan Berrigan spent a lifetime standing against the hubris of policymakers—and religious leaders—who had lost their way • *by* ROSE MARIE BERGER

Violence only exists with the help of *the lie!*" With these words Father Daniel Berrigan and I sealed our fate. It was summer 1995. August 6. We'd been invited to read at the Washington National Cathedral's service commemorating the 50th year since the U.S. used atomic weapons on civilians in Japan.

The cathedral was full. I was supposed to read an adaptation from Thomas Merton's scathing indictment of U.S. militarism, the poem "Original Child Bomb." Dan was slated to read from Soviet-resister Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's Nobel Prize lecture and from Maximilian Kolbe, the Polish priest who exchanged his life for a fellow prisoner in Auschwitz.

Minutes before the liturgy began, a member of the cathedral staff told us there was a change in the readings. Thomas Merton was too controversial; I should read from Deuteronomy. Dan should also read from scripture instead of from Solzhenitsyn and Kolbe.

They handed out a new order of worship. Inserted in it was a statement that included this sentence: "Washington National Cathedral has no official view on the history or morality of the first atom bombs or on any foreign or military policy."

Dan and I exchanged glances: This could not stand. The

At right, Daniel Berrigan outside St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City after leading an anti-war Mass in 1972.



Dan Berrigan shares a moment at a campus event in San Francisco in 1968.

Half Full

A cup of coffee with Dan.

by LUKE NEPHEW

After class we would go to the cafeteria. The first time we went, Dan asked if I'd want to split a coffee with him. Sure. And it became a quiet tradition. A ritual. Either he would get it or I would, but we'd always split it. And as we sat around the table and resurrected resistance, the coffee cup would go back and forth between us. It was like the conversation, a constant invitation. Hmmm, interesting, delicious. Have this. Have some more. Dan always wanted to hear our ideas. Sip. Smile. Question. The cup would be in front of me again. Accompanied by a challenge like "Well, instead of wondering why most of these students don't protest, tell me about why you do."

I needed coffee for those questions. And he was always quick to pass the cup. It was like a generosity battle. Each intent on serving the other. He would take a sip and yet the coffee would barely go away. Sip. Smile. Mind-opening idea. Question. We danced with the cup. And with the world. And with each other. It was always the best half cup of coffee I had ever had. So full of hard inquiries and generous love. Our dialogue laid bare the empty promise of our violent society and yet, in communion with each other, our cup was always half full. Sometimes when I'm alone, I look down at a half-drunk cup of coffee and wonder, what would he ask now? ■

Luke Nephew is co-founder and artist educator of the Peace Poets in New York City.

opening hymn was beginning. We were pulled into the processional line.

I've rarely felt so sick to my stomach. Then it was my turn to ascend the altar steps to the pulpit. I looked at Dan again. He smiled, nodded, and wiggled his eyebrows.

Up I rose.

With the microphone booming, I opened my remarks by saying that it was a travesty for "America's church" to say that it has no official view on the morality of the first atom bombs; it was a sin for a church to print such a thing. I asked forgiveness from Hisayo Yamashita, a survivor of the bomb dropped on Hiroshima, and other *hibakusha* seated in places of honor in the front row.

Instead of reading from Deuteronomy, I read from the original text: Meditations on the Transfiguration with words from Thomas Merton's poem "Original Child Bomb."

I sat down. Eyes closed. Heart in throat. Face aflame. Silence.

Then came the voice of Daniel Berrigan: "Violence only exists with the help of the lie!" Today in America, this church, to our great shame, has perpetuated the lie. What if Christians had taken no official view on the history or morality of slavery?" For the next 20 minutes, America's finest poet-prophet-priest called down a litany of condemnation and conscience on the hubris of America's religious leaders who had lost their way. The straight way had become crooked. Dan tried it in place again.

Following the service, Dan and I were both chastised and then banned from the cathedral grounds by the person whose "good order" we had "fractured." Over time the ban was forgotten; but Dan's prophetic speech lives on.

Berrigan concludes his book *No Gods But One* with this: "Perhaps it is with relief, sorrowful and secret, that Moses draws a last breath? The 40-year burden, carried with such nobility, is lifted from his shoulders. He dies in a good spirit ... Moses indeed can cry out, as a great descendant cried out in our lifetime, 'I have climbed the mountain; I have seen the Promise. Free, great God, free at last!'"

The mantle is now ours. ■

Rose Marie Berger, a Sojourners senior associate editor, is a Catholic peace activist and poet.

Rose Marie Berger



Dan Berrigan's arrests for nonviolent civil disobedience included a 1983 protest against the U.S. invasion of Grenada (below left) and a 1991 sit-in, at age 70, in front of Planned Parenthood to oppose abortion.

Bettmann Archives



Rochester City Newspaper

It Isn't All About Sex

Human trafficking is broader than sex trafficking. So why do activists tend to ignore the widespread abuse of forced labor? • by YVONNE C. ZIMMERMAN

HUMAN TRAFFICKING is one of the least morally controversial social justice issues of our time. Agreement that human trafficking is wrong and must end is widespread, if not completely unanimous. Yet when most people hear the term “human trafficking,” they envision sex trafficking: vivid images of young women forced to work in “massage parlors” and brothels, selling sex on the streets of major cities.

But human trafficking is broader than sex trafficking. U.S. law defines human trafficking through the legal categories of fraud, force, or coercion. In simple terms, human trafficking occurs when individuals lose control over their lives and are forced to work for nothing or next to nothing. Someone who has been trafficked does not have control over the terms and conditions of their employment; they can't leave for fear that they or someone they care about will be harmed as a result.

So while trafficking certainly can take the form of sexual exploitation, it can also look like nannies or janitors, workers in slaughterhouses or meat-packing plants, people forced to work on factory assembly lines and rural farms. It takes place in both the formal and informal economies; it may involve adults and children.

When sex trafficking isn't

Human trafficking hasn't always been so tightly linked to sex trafficking. In the 1980s and 1990s, there were a number of nonprofits dedicated to combatting labor exploitation in all its forms. But when one of the first pieces of anti-trafficking legislation was proposed in 1999, its congressional sponsors wished to differentiate between sex-trafficking and other forms of labor exploitation. They “did not want ‘low-wage sweatshop issues’ to cloud the issue of human

Sarah Reynolds/Southern Poverty Law



Norma and other women from Hidalgo, Mexico, took guest-worker jobs harvesting tomatoes in Florida. They were locked up at night by their “employers” and not allowed to communicate with others.



trafficking, which, they argued, was essentially about the sexual exploitation of women and girls and not about exploited labor more generally,” as Letitia Campbell and I wrote in 2014. Significantly revised anti-trafficking legislation was signed into law in late 2000.

Beginning in 2001, the George W. Bush administration implemented the new anti-trafficking law, making prostitution and sex-trafficking centerpieces of its gender policy. A 2002 National Security Presidential Directive on human trafficking called prostitution “inherently harmful and dehumanizing,” and the administration insisted that prostitution and sex-trafficking are linked phenomena.

For many people—especially those who cannot imagine selling sex *except* by force, fraud, or coercion—conflating commercial sex

“Exploited migrant labor undergirds parts of the U.S. economy.”

and human trafficking makes sense. Linking prostitution and sex trafficking also resonates with many Christians’ moral sensibilities.

Yet people in the sex industry report widely varying experiences. And as Christian author Benjamin L. Corey points out, not everyone in the sex industry has experienced trafficking. Human trafficking is “always an issue of forced labor, and must meet the definition of being conducted through ‘force, fraud, or coercion,’” explains Corey. “Without one of these criteria, a situation can never be considered human trafficking. A great way to summarize the three criteria is to ask: Are they choosing to do this work, or is someone making them? If someone isn’t making them do it, it’s not trafficking.”

Chickens and eggs

According to legal scholar Rebecca Wharton, “forced or exploitative labor has always been more acceptable than prostitution in American culture.” As a result, labor trafficking garners far less attention than commercial sex and sex trafficking. But as anthropologist Denise Brennan argues in her recent book *Life Interrupted: Trafficking into Forced Labor in the United States*, there are plenty of reasons we should be concerned about labor trafficking. “Contrary to sensationalistic claims that slavery is all around us, a more mundane and politically thorny

Indian workers lured to Gulf Coast shipyards with false promises of U.S. residency demanded better working and living conditions, but Signal International fired the organizers.

reality is that exploited migrant labor undergirds parts of the U.S. economy,” she writes. According to Brennan, labor trafficking in the U.S. has two primary causes: migration, and abuses surrounding labor.

Both of these factors played major roles in a recent labor trafficking case in which federal prosecutors indicted six people at one of the U.S.’s largest egg producers, Trillium Farms in Wyandot County, Ohio. In December 2014, authorities raided a trailer park in nearby Marion County, taking 45 people, including eight teenage minors, into protective custody. The Guatemalan teenagers reported being forced to work on the chicken farm for 12 hours per day, six days a week, while making as little as \$2 per day.

So how did eight Guatemalan teenagers end up as trafficking victims in America’s heartland? Some history is helpful: In 2006, Guatemala’s 36-year civil war ended; now, a decade later, the nation still struggles to compete in the global economy. Wages are so low that many full-time workers do not earn enough to feed their families. Others cannot find gainful employment; gang violence and drug cartels thrive, forcing many to flee.

But Guatemalan native Aroldo Castillo-Serrano found a way to make good money in the impossibly tough Guatemalan economy: smuggling people to the U.S. His services commanded upward of \$15,000 per person, according to *The Washington Post*. Once in the U.S., his clients paid their debts off by working at Trillium Farms.

The parents of one teen, who I’ll call “Javier,” paid smugglers to help their son get to the U.S. because they knew his future in Guatemala was bleak. Javier hoped to go to Florida to live with an uncle.

Javier became one of the more than 125,000 unaccompanied minors stopped at the U.S.-Mexico border since 2011—a dramatic increase from previous years. Some of these minors were denied entry, but others, like Javier, were placed in Office for Refugee Resettlement-run shelters until they could be reunited with their parents, relatives, or other qualified sponsors.

While Javier was in the shelter, smuggler Castillo-Serrano arranged for someone to file a Family Reunification Application, fraudulently claiming to be a family friend. Upon his release, Javier was taken to the Ohio chicken farm where Castillo-Serrano informed him



that he must work to pay off the \$20,000 fee he now owed. He told Javier that his parents would be shot if he tried to leave before his debt was paid. Javier called his uncle in Florida and described the violent threats, miserable living conditions, and how he had to hand his paychecks over to Castillo-Serrano’s associates. “Please,” he said. “I’m hungry, and my heart is bursting with fear.”

“They were working enthusiastically”

Situations like the labor-trafficking at Trillium Farms occur because the U.S. does not have universal legal protection for workers. Most worker protections are contingent on a worker’s immigration status. For undocumented workers such as Javier, legal protections against exploitation are very limited. Employers know they can get away with treating undocumented migrant workers in ways they could never treat employees who are American citizens. Further, the demand for migrant labor is concentrated in labor sectors such as agriculture that typically pay low wages and that are poorly regulated, if they are regulated at all. “Widespread migrant labor abuse—including trafficking—is the result of a robust demand for low-wage workers, the absence of federal immigration reform, ineffective labor laws, and migrants’ fear of detection, detention, and deportation,” writes Brennan.

Nonetheless, many migrants are highly motivated workers. Bartolo Dominguez, a van driver who took the teens to and from the egg farm each day and one of the defendants in the Trillium Farms case, claimed that he didn’t realize the Guatemalan teens were in a trafficking situation. “If I would have known about the abuse of the teens, I would have told somebody. I thought everything was fine,” he said. “They were

working enthusiastically.”

Of the 45 immigrants taken into custody in the December 2014 raid, the indictment identified all eight of the minors and two adults as victims of human trafficking. The teens received initial care and services from the Salvation Army of Central Ohio before they were returned to federal custody and transferred out of state. The fates of the other 35 people who were not determined to be victims of trafficking is less clear. There is a razor-thin line between the law’s ability to recognize undocumented workers as victims of human trafficking who need services and support, or to categorize them as law-breakers. There is no neutral legal category for undocumented immigrants. They are either criminals or victims. Likely, they were deported.

Notably, Trillium Farms escaped indictment because the Guatemalan migrants were not formally their employees, but employees of Haba Corporate Services, a company Trillium contracted to provide manual labor.

This is how it ends

What strategies most effectively prevent human trafficking? By far the dominant legislative response to human trafficking has been criminalization. By 2013, all 50 states and Washington, D.C., passed state-level anti-trafficking laws, augmenting federal policy. But while anti-trafficking laws have a role to play in ending trafficking, the criminalization model has problems. Some experts have suggested that anti-human trafficking laws have been more successful at criminalizing already marginalized communities and punitively enforcing immigration policies than at providing concrete benefits to victims.

Not all legal mechanisms rely on

Gary Coronado/Palm Beach Post

criminalization, however. Other approaches include comprehensive immigration reform to fix the broken system of U.S. immigration laws and strengthening worker protection laws. Regularizing migration and changing visa requirements for foreign workers so they could change employers at will would lessen migrant workers' vulnerability to forced labor. Strengthening worker-protection laws complements immigration reform. Workers' legal protections should not be contingent on their immigration status.

But what does anti-trafficking activism look like for people who aren't professional lobbyists or savvy policy wonks? Meg Munoz, a trafficking survivor and founder of the nonprofit organization Abeni, which works with people in the sex trades and who have experienced domestic sex-trafficking, identifies Christian anti-trafficking activ-

Sisters, advocating for kids in foster care, or supporting the expansion of shelters and other services for queer, transgender, and gender-nonconforming youth who've been kicked out of their homes. It can look like becoming a foster parent.

Anti-trafficking activism can also include writing letters to elected officials in support of comprehensive immigration reform; supporting ballot measures that expand protections of sex workers' civil rights; or protesting police brutality and racial profiling. People might join together to call the corporate headquarters of Wendy's asking them to join other companies (including McDonalds, Burger King, Whole Foods, Trader Joe's, Chipotle, and Walmart) in signing on to the Coalition of Immokalee Workers' Fair Food Program in which corporate buyers of Florida toma-

Protecting workers' legal rights should not be contingent on their immigration status.

ists' obsessive preoccupation with sex as a major roadblock to effective activism and advocacy on human trafficking. She pleads with Christian anti-trafficking activists: "Please stop focusing on the 'Is sex work right or wrong?' narrative and start focusing on people. We are all entitled to rights, respect, dignity, and protections. Please stop limiting human rights to those you simply agree with."

Anti-trafficking work that is rooted in respect for human rights can take many forms. It can look like feeding hungry people through shelters, soup kitchens, food banks, or brown-bag lunch ministries, as well as addressing food insecurity more systematically. It can look like joining local efforts to expand affordable housing, increasing public mental health services, or participating in the "Fight for \$15" movement to raise the minimum wage. The common thread uniting these suggestions is meeting tangible material needs of people who are vulnerable to exploitation.

For people concerned specifically with child trafficking, anti-trafficking work can look like providing childcare to low-income families so their kids are safe and cared for while they're at work. It might mean mentoring youth through Big Brothers Big

toes pay farm workers an additional cent per pound and agree to comply with a Code of Conduct that includes zero tolerance for forced labor and sexual assault of workers. Such action, coupled with refraining from patronizing Wendy's restaurants in the meantime, sends a strong message. Anti-trafficking organizations and groups that assist people who are vulnerable to trafficking, such as Abeni and the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, are always in need of financial support.

Experiencing human trafficking means losing control of one's life. Therefore, the goal of liberative anti-trafficking activism and advocacy must be to return control back to people who have experienced trafficking. This takes place through recognition of and support for their human dignity and human rights (economic, political, and social) and increasing the number of realistic and meaningful options people have in their lives, as well as respecting the choices that people make with their freedom. ■

Yvonne C. Zimmerman, author of Other Dreams of Freedom: Religion, Sex, and Human Trafficking, is an associate professor of Christian Ethics at the Methodist Theological School in Ohio.

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Wes Jackson, left, and Wendell Berry.

Envisioning a 50-Year Future

WE LURCH FROM ecological crisis to crisis, all of them real: So far this year we've seen the sickening collapse of much of the Pacific's coral in a 10-month blitz of hot ocean water; we've watched a city of 90,000 evacuated ahead of a forest fire so big it was creating its own weather; and we've witnessed the earliest onset of widespread Arctic melting ever recorded. And so on.

All of these need urgent responses—the fire company has to report for duty. So it's been sweet to

Berry, who keep patiently pushing the most deeply (and literally) rooted piece of legislation I know of, the 50-year Farm Bill.

The Kansas geneticist and farmer, and the Kentucky writer and farmer, begin with the premise that roots are important. Our industrial agriculture has plowed up the perennial crops that once covered the continent (and the planet) and replaced them with high-yielding annuals. All that wheat and corn feed us cheaply—and lead to dead, eroding soils that, among other things, can't soak up much in the way of carbon. So Jackson, at his Land Institute, has spent the last decades crossing annual and perennial crops. The goal is nothing less than grains you don't need to replant every year—grains that will grow deep, tangled roots into the prairie soil, feeding us and restoring a desperately needed balance.

THIS ISN'T EASY work. Because engineers have done their jobs so well, we could replace the world's fossil fuels with sun, wind, and other renewables by 2030 (if we could get the

dead hand of the fossil fuel industry out of the way). But far fewer agronomists have been working on perennialization, which is why the legislation Jackson and Berry propose would ask the U.S. Department of Agriculture to fund and monitor such work in the years to come. If all goes well, by mid-century the sunflower, say, will be where the solar panel is now: fully perennialized and busily producing oil on a heartening scale.

One of the most beautiful features of the 50-year Farm Bill is precisely that it envisions a future for us—a future hard to imagine some days, as one grapples with the latest scientific reports from the front. Both Berry and Jackson are of an age that guarantees they won't see the end of the effort that they've launched, which is also beautiful. It implies the continuing, connected care for the one planet we've got—our best chance at salvation if we can

only muster it. Relatively fast. ■

Bill McKibben is the Schumann Distinguished Scholar at Middlebury College in Vermont and founder of 350.org.



“Soon” and “urgent” are words that can keep us from seeing the deep roots of problems—and solutions.

see activists doing civil disobedience on an unprecedented scale around the world and increasingly putting the fossil fuel industry on the defensive. We've got to turn the tide soon.

But “soon” and “urgent” and “emergency” are words that can blind us as well—keep us from seeing the deep roots of problems and solutions. So it is a very good thing that we have some folks who don't scare easily. I'm thinking in particular of Wes Jackson and Wendell

Joan Halifax/guy Mendes

Shadows

Preserved in the museum at Hiroshima
a wall imprinted with the shadow
of a boy reaching for a dragonfly
the moment before both were vaporized.

In the long history of shadows
this may be the only one that has
outlived by over half a century
the light that cast it.

On the far side of the world
another museum in Los Alamos
houses a full-scale replica of “Little Boy,”
the bomb that made the shadow.

When “Little Boy” went critical, the sun
vanished like a star at daybreak.
A few moments later the sun returned,
and ordinary shadows.

But I am still thinking of the boy,
thrust too quickly
from this world of shadows
into light wondering, perhaps,

why God has punished him
for reaching for a dragonfly
in whose glassine wings he saw
another sun—flash.

Richard Schiffman is an environmental journalist and poet. His collection of poems, What the Dust Doesn't Know, is forthcoming from Salmon Press. Art by Shutterstock.

The Taste of Liberation

**In a world that tells black women
their lives don't matter,
cooking nutritious foods
can be a quiet act
of resistance.**

by **TAYLOR NICHOLE
JOHNSON**



Shutterstock photo

I TURN ON THE FAUCET and baptize the collards under ice-cold water for several seconds. I pick the leaves apart with my 12-year-old hands, casting the stems to the side.

A few feet away, my mother reheats her coffee in the microwave and then, between sips, crumbles cornbread and chicken liver into a large, sage-colored bowl. The familiar scent of sweet potato pies dances around the kitchen, along with the unmistakable laughter of my mother on the phone with one of her girlfriends.

Later, I'll wash and dry the countertop before anointing it with a blanket of white flour in preparation for my mother to make the rolls—my mother's grandmother's recipe and the most relished part of the Thanksgiving and Christmas meals. To this day, my mother is one of a few family members who has recorded the secret, something she has always carried with pride.

Some of my first memories about food are stories like this one, at home with my mother conjuring her magic in the kitchen, creating something wonderful out of simple ingredients, as is our legacy as black women. Her food was more than just food; it was nourishment.

Before seminary, before I found language for my womanist theology and politics, before Trayvon Martin and Renisha

McBride ushered me into the movement, my hands were actively developing the muscle memory that would later fuel my healing. It took me 15 years to realize that during those times in our kitchen

with my mother, I was developing

At right, the author—with her mother—and some of the dishes she prepared with her new resolve for health and meatless nutrition.



For me, cooking creative, whole meals says, “I

practical tools for my own survival and healing: cutting, peeling, dicing, skinning—not just kitchen duties, but small acts of self-determination.

My addiction to ‘non-food’

I began eating food in secret in high school, mindlessly devouring mini Snickers bars, ice cream, pizza rolls, and French fries in the parking lot at McDonald’s as a way to comfort myself and to avoid what I was truly feeling. When I was stressed or feeling depressed about school or what was going on with my family, I would stuff my face with junk food, making sure to hide the wrappers beneath my mattress.

My addiction to processed and junk food peaked in college. Though I attended a Christian university centered on building community and God’s love, racialized tension was—and is—present. Sure, the university affirmed blackness when it was marketable (diversity!), but the unique issues faced by black students—getting stopped by Public Safety while returning to campus at night, being put on the spot by a professor to give “the black opinion” during class, enduring the complaints of white hall mates about the smell of TCB scalp conditioner, and even waking up to a swastika carved into one’s personal belongings—were devalued or ignored. I still carry the painful memories of these experiences and those of my peers.

And being surrounded by a sea of size-2 white women didn’t help my continued depressive and emotional eating habits. I ate whatever I could to temporarily feel calmer or happier, not really aware of the toll it was taking on my body. Outwardly, I was a high-achieving, well-respected, well-educated, “strong” young black woman, but inwardly I was not well—not in my spirit or in my body. The non-food I used as self-medication reflected this.

There were occasional spurts of exercise when I was feeling guilty about the way I was eating, but overall I was pretty sedentary. There was a point during my senior year of college when I was constantly having migraine-like headaches. At the time, I attributed it to too many hours squinting at my biology books, but now I know that what I was (and wasn’t) eating was also a contributing factor. Food had a grip over my health and my quality of life. I was completely unaware.

Food as self-medication

At age 20, I saw food as something to fulfill my addiction to sugar or salt. The concept of food as a strategy for healing was entirely foreign. I didn’t have anyone in my life to show me how food could nourish me, boost my energy, help regulate my mood swings, or bring me healing.

For many of us this is generational. As black women, too many of us have witnessed the women in our lives—our mothers, grandmothers, aunties, and cousins—who outwardly kept their entire world spinning while privately suffering in silence. And there’s not often space to consider eating healthfully when you’re struggling to simply survive and provide for your children.

While my father was deployed overseas, often for six to seven months at a time, my mother raised me and my four younger siblings, two of whom have mental disabilities. And because we were stationed in San Diego County, away from our family in Ohio, my mother did this alone.

I love and respect my mother more than anyone else. She was the first person I ever loved and is a woman and mother I desire to emulate. Yet eating holistically and taking care of her body was not something she practiced. The same woman who gave me those early tools for healing also used food as a form of self-medication. Witnessing this made an indelible mark on me as I was coming into womanhood. I do not shame her for what she could not provide. I can only humbly honor her for immense sacrifice, courage, brilliance, and fierce love.

An ethic of wholeness and healing

My journey to healing through food and a whole-foods, plant-based lifestyle began in seminary where I was introduced to womanist theology, a theological language that was not only salvific for my soul but also for my physical body. I wrestled with the meaning of evil and hope in the context of current and historic black suffering, including the lack of affordable, healthy food; the then-recent killings of Renisha and Trayvon; and the generational trauma of rape, subjugation, and servitude of black women and girls.

It was the words of womanist theologians, writers, and preachers who made me reconcile what it meant to be black and female in a world where black women and



matter to myself, my community, and to God. I am not disposable."

girls are consistently deemed unvaluable and invisible. The black Christ that theologian Kelly Brown Douglas described—a Christ who challenges us to bring the entire black community to a place of wholeness—forced me to consider the ways in which pursuing wholeness and healing were not yet a part of my spiritual practice. And when I thought about Delores Williams' definition of sin—the violence, disempowerment, and internalized racism black women face—as well as her definition of salvation—what brings positive social change to the real conditions of real black women—I found permission to no longer diminish myself for the sake of Jesus, but to honor and love Jesus by honoring and loving myself.

It is because of these words that I re-evaluated my relationship with my body. Do I see myself as being beautifully created in the image of God and worthy of being loved by God? Do I love myself enough to care for God's creation, my body? Does what and how I am eating promote an ethic of wholeness and healing?

Although I wasn't aware of it at the time, I was being converted. The seeds my mother and I planted 15 years earlier in the kitchen burst forth with vitality.

Choosing myself, unapologetically

In the past, food fueled my depression. Now it fuels my activism, my theology, and my work with nutrition, food sovereignty, and black girls. As a person who has been involved in the Black Lives Matter movement, it can be easy to focus on the fast killing of our people while ignoring the nutritional violence that is slowly killing us every day. Yes, our lives matter, but so does our everyday living, wellness, and future. This is why I cook for myself every day. For me, cooking creative, whole meals is a radical act that says, "I matter to myself, my community, and to God. I am not disposable."

It is also a form of therapy, a way for me to more healthfully process the violence that affects my community every day. I still remember the meal I cooked on the day I heard the news about the killing of the Charleston Nine: plantains, yellow rice, collard greens, and black beans, with Nina Simone's "Mississippi Goddam" playing in the background on repeat. I was more than

saddened, I was numb. Tending to my body in the midst of such grief created space for me to process in a constructive way, even if for a moment.

This is why I believe that caring about what I do and do not put in my body—and teaching others how to do the same—says, "Yes, I am still here." It becomes a tangible form of resistance, an act of radical self-love against the oppressive systems that seek to kill us, both swiftly and slowly.

Food is also a way for me unapologetically to choose myself. Our society, churches, and movement spaces have proven that it is much easier to value the sacrifices of black women rather than the *lives* of black women. These two ideas are not synonymous.

I often ask myself,
"What would a world
where black folks are truly
safe and free taste like?"



Requiring black women to sacrifice pieces of themselves for the sake of the movement is damaging and devaluing. It is the opposite of liberation. Taking the time to make myself a coconut milk curry or homemade almond milk is a way for me to disrupt the narrative that what I can produce and offer others is the source of my worth. It has taken time for me to develop the courage to center myself in this way, and it is still something that I struggle with, but I know now I am entirely no good to any fight for justice if I am not well. I am grateful to have a life partner and a family that affirms me in this path, even if it something that they do not always fully understand. This, I know, is a privilege that not all black woman have.

The taste of freedom

I often ask myself, "What would a world where black folks are truly safe and free taste like?" For me, it would be crunchy, with lots of texture, spice, and bold color. It would taste like goodness, groundedness, and comfort;

like heritage food from my ancestors—collards, okra, millet, and sweet potatoes—but also newer foods that I now crave and appreciate: green radishes, sauerkraut, brown rice noodles, and tempeh. It would be affordable without exploiting the lives and labor of black and brown people around the world. It would taste like justice and Black Girl Magic.

The tools to heal our bodies as black women are becoming more accessible. The question we must ask ourselves is, "Do you want to be made well?" (John 5:6). For those of us not on the margins and who are privileged to have access to these tools—fresh, healthy produce; clean water—our duty is to create pathways for these things to be affordable and readily available to our sisters. This is the heart of an inclusive womanist theology: Either we all are free or none of us are free.

Every day I am reminded of the work that is required to be a black woman who is healthy. I work predominantly with black women in North Philadelphia who are mostly poor and who receive SNAP benefits. I am challenged to interpret my beliefs about food and self-care in a way that is fully accessible to women who do not hold the same formal education and level of upward mobility that I have. I am convinced that being well is our birthright as black women. I believe that wellness through food can be developed and expanded to include every black girl and woman, regardless of class and economic status.

I no longer want to be strong—I want to be whole. I want the abundant life that God intends for me and my family. I want to experience pleasure, joy, and fulfillment. I want to grow, cook, and eat food that gives me life and I want to teach others how to do the same. I want people to know and believe that food has the power to transform and heal. These things are not tangential to the mission of black liberation and freedom; they are at its very core. ■

Taylor Nichole Johnson is an educator, activist, and urban gardener who uses food as a vessel for building wellness, resiliency, and healing in her community. She works as a nutrition educator at The Food Trust, a food access organization headquartered in Philadelphia. Follow her on Instagram (@sistahoftheyam) for plant-based food creations and reflections.



IF...

**I KNOW ALL THE LATEST
ANTI-OPPRESSIVE LINGO,**

BUT HAVE NOT LOVE...



IF

I speak about courage and justice, and siding with the oppressed, and speaking truth to power no matter the cost, but do not speak about love ... **I AM JUST A LOUD-MOUTHED ORATOR, A WHITE SAVIOR, A SHAMELESS SELF-PROMOTER.**

If I am excellent at nonviolent communication, and I take great pictures, and I know all the latest anti-oppressive lingo, and I can analyze racist systems so as to dismantle them entirely, but have not love, **I AM NOTHING.**

If I fully embrace the work of prophet and activist and martyr, and get dragged away by the riot police or bombed by the military of my own country, but have not love, **THAT IS NO USE TO ANYONE.**

LOVE SURVIVES EVIL, war, oppression. Love is patient. It remains when the tear gas clears and the children go back to school. It is still there when the water is protected. Love is kind, not arrogant, not insisting on its own way, but making space for joy and truth even in the hardest circumstance.

Whether it is love between two people, or love of a person for their community, or love of a community for its land, or love of justice and peace and equity, love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.

CLEVER WORDS WILL BE FORGOTTEN.

The most interesting facts are subject to revision. The best sermon you've ever heard—you will forget. Right now, everything we do is flawed and inaccurate. But. One day we'll experience Truth with a Capital T. And then all this will be unnecessary.

Before I was mature, I was immature. In becoming mature, I left behind ways of speaking, thinking, and reasoning that were immature.

RIGHT NOW we're hearing murmurs, reading translations, seeing shadows on the wall, but one day we'll see face to face.

RIGHT NOW, half of the time I'm guessing, but one day I will know beyond all doubt—and I will be fully known.

What remains when it is all stripped away is three things:

FAITH that the flawed world as we see it is not all that there is;

HOPE that the next generation will live in a better world;

and **LOVE** to give us the strength and motivation to build it.



THE GREATEST OF THESE IS LOVE.

Peter Haresnape, a member of the Indigenous Peoples Solidarity team, lives in Toronto with his husband, Ken. This reflection on 1 Corinthians 13 was written as a sermon on liberating love for Christian Peacemaker Teams. Published with permission of Christian Peacemaker Teams. Illustration by Serazetdinov



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People OF THE BOOKS

The simple acts of reading and talking together can be powerful catalysts for a church's vision and mission.

by C. CHRISTOPHER SMITH

NOT LONG AFTER graduating college, I read everything I could find about various expressions of Christian community. Somewhere along the way, I stumbled upon the stories of Dorothy Day, Peter Maurin, and the other Catholic Workers who would follow in their footsteps. I remember being immediately captivated by the Catholic Worker vision for hospitality houses that were community hubs for both *action*—growing food, feeding the hungry, protesting American militarism—and *learning*—cultivating conversation and reflection on radical Christian faithfulness and the socioeconomic vision that defined the movement.



The more
diversely we
read, the richer
our social
imagination
will be.

Although perhaps more widely admired for their activism and works of mercy, the Catholic Workers have long published a newspaper that is a catalyst for their social vision—fusing the stories of scripture, saints, and literature with the ubiquitous challenge to live faithfully in an age marked by greed and violence. In the words of Maurin, an essential part of their mission is to make “workers out of scholars and scholars out of workers.”

Day and Maurin, co-founders of the Catholic Worker movement, are remembered as visionaries, guided by an idealism that sought to embody not only the stories of Jesus and the ancient Hebrew prophets, but also those of the radical Christian saints—such as Francis or Teresa of Avila—and modern writers whose ideas energized them—such as Dostoevsky, Peter Kropotkin, and Simone Weil. The stories of St. Francis were, for Maurin, more than quaint bits of history. Rather, they were a guiding vision that daily compelled him to live out a life of holy poverty.

In Robert Coles’ celebrated biography *Dorothy Day: A Radical Devotion*, he devotes a chapter to exploring her idealism and where it came from. He observes that “[Dostoevsky] would not let her sleep. Tennyson stirred her to romantic anguish. Passages from the Bible’s words somehow stood out, as if meant for her.” Although idealism often carries the negative connotation of naïveté, we could alternately describe these virtues that Coles found in Day as her “social imagination”: the stories, ideas, and forces at work shaping reality behind and throughout her life. Day’s greatest hope was that she might be one who read Dostoevsky well. She also learned as much

about forgiveness from the novels of Charles Dickens as she did from scripture. Ignazio Silone’s novel *Bread and Wine* helped her understand the nature of companionship, of being present to one another in sharing food together.

For Day and Maurin, the social imagination was the arena in which compelling stories guided them as they grappled with daily decisions about how to live transformatively in the world. As we seek to faithfully incarnate God’s reign in the 21st century, we also need a healthy social imagination, cultivated through attentive habits of reading that are engaged with our places and the world. Our local church communities are essential spaces in which we are called to nurture this social imagination that interweaves learning and action.

Living out a social vision

Throughout their history, Catholic Workers have emphasized that their socioeconomic vision is not just something to be talked about and worked for—they seek to *embody* their vision through communities of like-minded people in particular places. Maurin, quoting the Industrial Workers of the World, would say that Catholic Worker communities, whether urban houses of hospitality or rural farms, were intended “to create a new society within the shell of the old.” As frustrating as churches can be, too often bogged down with bureaucracy and bad theology, it is in community that Christ’s followers are called to live together in a way that gives form to the person and vision of Jesus.

My personal ideas for how the world should function are of little value until they are shared with others and inform the ways in which I interact with actual human communities. As visionary as both Maurin and Day were, their hopes for society were not held in isolation. Rather, their ideas were deeply shaped not only by one another, but also by the larger Catholic Worker community. Our congregations could stand to learn a great deal from the Catholic Workers in terms of being attentive both to cultivating a robust Christian social vision (and the biblical interpretation and theology that undergirds it) and to the ways in which we work to exemplify that social vision in our particular places.

Reading is essential to cultivating such a

Christian social vision, as it guides our quest to understand our identity.

In the Christian tradition, reading scripture is the primary way in which we discern our identity. Day's contributions to the Catholic Worker movement, for instance, were profoundly shaped by her rigorous commitment to daily Bible reading, and the ways that this practice seasoned her thinking. Scripture, however, cannot and should not be read in a vacuum. Works of biblical scholarship and theology help us understand what the texts meant to their original readers and how they have been interpreted by communities of Christ's followers in other times and places. Our calling is not only to understand scripture but also, through our understanding of it, adopt a way of life that reflects the fullness of Christ to our neighbors.

A confluence of genres

Reading aids in the work of embodiment by clarifying our understanding of who we are, of the tradition to which we belong, and of the ends toward which we hope to move. The work of embodiment also requires that we have a solid understanding of the time and place within which we exist. Reading fiction, poetry, philosophy, social theory, and many other sorts of books can contribute meaningfully to this work. Fiction, for instance, can increase our capacity for empathy, as we are allowed to share in the thoughts and emotions of people who differ from ourselves. Reading poetry slows us down and challenges us to be attentive to minute details. Works of sociology, economics, and other social theory help to deepen our understanding of the times we live in and of how we might faithfully follow Jesus in our day.

A church acts well in the world when, like the Catholic Workers, our action flows from a deep sense of our identity and a rich imagination of what it looks like for us to be faithful as a community to the way of Jesus.

The more diversely we read, the richer our social imagination will be. But this does not necessarily mean that each person in our church must read as widely (and identically) as possible. The diversity of reading can be spread out across our community, each of us reading the sorts of books we are personally passionate about, with an eye toward the potential relevance of our personal reading

to enrich our shared faithfulness. The social vision of the Catholic Workers, for instance, benefitted from the confluence of Day's passion for reading fiction and Maurin's deep knowledge of the historical tradition of radical Christian discipleship.

In order for our congregations to benefit from the personal reading of each member, we also need to cultivate habits of conversation. As books such as Bill Bishop's *The Big Sort* (2008) and Sherry Turkle's *Reclaiming Conversation* (2015) remind us, conversation is rapidly becoming a lost art in 21st century North America. One of the fundamental tenets of the social vision of Maurin was the necessity of round-table discussions, which helped clarify the thought of a community. Through conversation, we not only clarify the vision that we hope will guide our action, but we also make decisions about the shape that our life together will take, challenging each other to live faithfully to that collective vision.

Conversation is at the heart

For many Christians, church has been reduced to a commodity: a handful of services and programs that we regularly consume as part of our religious duty. In conversation, however, our experience of church cannot be relegated to passive consumption—we must be active participants, or the conversation will die off. Our congregations are in dire need of spaces in our life together in which we can relearn the art of conversation. Reading and discussing scripture together, perhaps in light of other books we are reading on our own, is one natural way for churches to ease themselves into the practice of conversation.

In my congregation, Englewood Christian Church, on the urban Near Eastside of Indianapolis, we have been privileged to do some important work in our neighborhood over the last two decades: early childhood education, affordable housing, hydroponic farming, economic development, and more. Yet what outsiders often miss are the years we have spent reading and talking together.

In the early 1990s, we stumbled into a regular practice of meeting every Sunday night for intentional conversation. In the course of this dialogue, we have wrestled with scripture, discussed books, and most

importantly tried to weave our reading and our convictions into a deeper, shared vision of what it might mean for us to embody Jesus' teachings together faithfully in this place. Although reading is central to our practice of conversation, our gathering is not a book club that people opt out if they are not interested in a particular reading. Rather, this conversation is at the very heart of our life together, and indeed it is the space in which we are ever discerning and clarifying what the unfolding shape of our congregation will be. Just as the Sunday morning service is a time set aside for us to practice worship, our Sunday evening conversation is a time we gather to practice being present and listening to one another, and learning to imagine how we will live into the scriptural story together.

Our Sunday night conversations have overflowed abundantly into a multitude of ongoing conversations that reach into all corners of our life together. For instance, reflecting on John McKnight's book *The Careless Society*, especially its theologically rich postscript, has been immensely helpful in transforming our imagination about what it looks like to love our neighbors in ways that do not demean or dominate them. With a deep desire to love our neighbors well, and having the vision and trust that are fruits of conversation, we have been able to *do* some significant things together.

At Englewood, our experience demonstrates that with healthy doses of attentiveness and effort, it is possible for a church to cultivate a social imagination together—one that guides and sustains the work of transformative action. Our practices of reading and discussion have significantly reshaped the life, work, and vision of the congregation, continuing to form us into a more faithful embodiment of Christian love in our neighborhood. We heartily recommend robust habits of reading and talking together, and are grateful to communities such as the Catholic Workers who have inspired and guided us. ■

C. Christopher Smith is the founding editor of The Englewood Review of Books and author of the new book Reading for the Common Good: How Books Help Our Churches and Neighborhoods Flourish (IVP Books).

Changing the World WITH JOY

**Must we choose between seeking justice and reveling in
God's creation? • by KATHARINE M. PRESTON**

I arise in the morning torn between a desire to improve the world and a desire to enjoy the world. This makes it hard to plan the day.—E.B. White

ON A GORGEOUS FALL DAY, I bundle up just a bit and go sit on the rock under the apple tree in the middle of the field. The low-angled sun pours its subdued warmth onto the splashy orange of the maples, transient yellows of the tamarack, and faithfully green cedar. Further to the west, the mountains cut a postcard-perfect silhouette against the seasonally pale blue sky.

Such grace, warming my heart with joy.

A loving God calls us to experience such profligate joy. Now, in the latter decades of my life, time picks up its pace at an alarming rate. So I often promise myself to seek more opportunities to sit on rocks.

But instead, each morning, the genes of my activist mother, the teachings of my faith, and probably a bit too much of my own hubris conspire to bring on the conflicting desire to “improve” (well, okay ... save) the world.

So I strongly identify with E.B. White’s dilemma, softened by his gentle humor-with-a-touch-of-wistfulness.





Working for social justice seems like forever.

I am weary of being tedious to those around me who do not understand my seemingly quixotic campaigns. I am weary listening to the current loud, vicious, largely irrelevant public clamor surrounding issues to which I am dedicated. I am weary knowing that those

of moss. I am blessed to be close to these things. People can be nice too. But my spirit responds most to the wild. It is that simple.

For me, improving the world means reducing human-induced alterations to a planet I grew up with and love. Yet this goal seems to move farther away with each passing decade of my life. With less time on earth, I am unlikely to witness the success—or God forbid, the failure—of reaching the carbon reduction goals set for 2050. With or without me, we may not be able to save large swaths of the world and millions of lives because we have wasted so much time.

Perhaps for me the dilemma expressed by White is essentially a selfish thought: I

There should be no conflict

of us preaching minority positions that were once slammed as unrealistic have been proven right. But it took so long: civil rights, the Vietnam War, apartheid, climate change.

As we slogged through our protests and The Powers That Be didn't listen, lives were lost, billions of dollars spent, time wasted. I am impatient: Why can't the arc of the moral universe run, rather than just bend, toward justice?

It is easy to feel self-righteous at times. Or, alternatively, guilty, when I arise in the morning and choose to simply enjoy the day.

Enjoying the world, for me, means intentionally listening, looking, smelling, tasting, and feeling whatever wildness I can find around me: The call of migrating geese, the smell of balsam, a field of mountain flowers, spring water, or the softness of a bed

am terrified that if I do not step out in the morning ready to help improve the world, that which brings me the most joy will be gone. If not for me, for my children and grandchildren.

Signs of God alongside you

In his letter to the Romans, Paul reminds us of the close association between joy and hope: "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" (Romans 15:13).

Like most of us in the field of Improving the World, I know I need to notice hopeful signs to keep me going. Hope is not the same thing as joy, but I find that when you look for hopeful things, you come to recognize them as signs of God alongside you, keeping the world afloat. You may be buoyed with an upwelling of joy.

COP 21, the two-week-long international gathering in Paris to reverse the tide of climate change and save the world, was such a sign. Although far from perfect, the results of this December 2015 conference offer a helpful first step, perhaps as magnificent in the process as in the program eventually adopted. The pictures that came out of Paris—thousands of Indigenous people, children and young folks soon to inherit the problems, elders giving their sage advice—washed over me with a refreshing wave of new hope. Here

we saw the human world in all its glorious diversity of ethnicities, cultures, religious persuasions, dreams, passions, and commitments. Have we ever seen such a joyful affirmation that we are all one?

During those two weeks, there was actually talk of “keeping it in the ground,” with regard to fossil fuels. If you told me a year ago that this would be on the lips of Paris participants, I would have said you were a dreamer. Changing from a fossil-fuel-based economy to one of renewables is as economically revolutionary as the abolition of slavery. It has begun, and God be praised, I am alive to see it.

There were open discussions about

Rev. William Barber II calls the increasingly intersectional causes we are seeing a “moral fusion movement.” In his book *The Third Reconstruction: Moral Mondays, Fusion Politics and the Rise of a New Justice Movement*, he urged secular progressives to engage more with communities of faith. The movement is not about left and right, but right and wrong on all issues of justice—which communities of faith are already called to live out. Barber observed that younger members of what he calls the justice “tribes” seem to recognize better than the older veterans that working together gives more power to everyone’s efforts.

I take great joy from this—joyful grati-



between enjoying the world and improving it.

the limitations of unbridled capitalism. Capitalism is predicated on constant growth, while Ecology 101 teaches that growing forever is impossible. It is about time this serious disconnect was acknowledged, even if only tentatively.

The conference affirmed Pope Francis’ eloquent articulation (in *Laudato Si’*) of the connection between ecological integrity and social justice. Indeed, it did even more than that. On a global scale, there was recognition that all movements toward justice are one: Climate change, immigration, refugee resettlement, inequality, minimum wage, access to healthier food choices, racism, prison reform. Injustice is at the root of all these issues, and when we strike at the root, we weaken all manifestations.

The “moral fusion” movement

Martin Luther King Jr. recognized the connections between movements when he preached against the Vietnam War in 1967 and when he preached in support of the striking sanitation workers in 1968, the day before he was killed. Forty years later, Paul Hawken, in *Blessed Unrest*, enumerated hundreds of groups working for various causes that are intimately related: “All is connected ... no one thing can change all by itself.” Two years ago, Naomi Klein perceptively declared in a book title the power of the connection between climate change and capitalism: *This Changes Everything*.

tude that I have lived to see the day when I no longer have to feel a fleeting wave of guilt or uncertainty: Am I dedicating myself to the right cause? Should I spend time doing this instead of that? And can I go sit on the rock in the field for a bit?

Working for justice is a state of heart, not a category or an “issue.” And if it is a state of heart, then there should be no conflict between enjoying the world while improving it.

Recently, I went to a meeting of local faith communities exploring how we might be helpful with the world’s refugee crisis. It was an extraordinary gathering of mostly middle-aged people, veterans of many previous social justice engagements. At the end we sang “We Shall Overcome,” holding hands.

I looked around: Everyone there (even the smattering of younger activists) knew the words and the tune.

Maybe we will overcome the cynicism, the anger, the frustration, the weariness. Maybe the plan for the day can be to simply let the compassion in our hearts help us to work alongside God’s dreams for improving the world.

May the tune and words buoy us up to joy. ■

Katharine M. Preston is an ecumenical lay preacher and writer, concentrating on issues of social justice and climate change.



By Alex Nava

Raw, Exuberant **Grace**

Could the *duende* of Afro-Latin art and music set our theology free?

.....

NIETZSCHE GOT SOMETHING RIGHT about the soul: namely, that music is essential to its survival. In reacting to philosophical tendencies to marginalize or ignore the place of music, dance, poetry, and painting, Nietzsche would insist on the central importance of the arts in any philosophical investigation.

In my own discipline of theology, a similar concern is justified: When theology has taken its cue from modern philosophy, it, too, has slighted the role of music in considering the question of God. The result is a portrait of soul in monotone pitches, without color, without polyphony. Instead of a guiding rhythm in one's reflections, music is often relegated to a footnote or to an echo that reaches one's ear in barely perceptible, muffled sounds.

The most glaring exception to this general rule is the portrait of soul in black and Latin traditions. As James Baldwin famously noted, it is almost solely through music that black people have been able to tell their story. The same can be said about Latin cultures: Music has

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Grammy winner
Lila Downs

been a crucial medium for communicating with the modern world, with one's ancestors, and with God. It has been a defining feature of black and Latin-American identities—a key ingredient in the stew and spice of these cultures.

Given the storytelling capacity of music in these cases, I believe that any theology worthy of the Christian conviction of incarnation—where God is embodied in the vast rainbow of human cultures—might want to begin by calibrating its body and soul to the frequencies of music. With music booming in our ears, we might get an alternative history of religion and culture, told at a sonic level, in the beats of a drum, a bass line, chant, or grunt. We might learn about cultural styles and struggles left off the written record of modern European accounts of

the West, that exist only as oral and folk traditions.

Consider, for example, the role of drums and bass instruments in Afro-Latin traditions (such as the *batá*, *bongó*, and *marímbula* of the Cuban *son* music style): They are all considered sacramental objects, with particular drums and beats corresponding to certain Orishas and ceremonies. With the right stroke and caress, the drums are taught how to speak the language of the divine, and people are taught, in the process, how to use sound waves, timbres,

The music of the Americas is a remarkable record of the soul's agility.

and rhythms—in lieu of written texts—to interact with the sacred. Echoes of these drumbeats—dangerous, rebellious, foreboding—can be felt in the entire history of black music in the Americas.

On *duende*

In Federico García Lorca's search for soul, the great Andalusian poet drew riches from the legacy of *la convivencia*—the “coexistence” of Jews, Christians, and Muslims in the age of Moorish Spain. He saw in the music of Iberia a deep river of Arab, gypsy, African, Jewish, and Christian currents, all converging into a spinning whirlpool of grace that he called *duende*. Roughly equivalent to what African-American traditions have called “soul,” *duende* is a mysterious force that floods the mind, body, and spirit of a great artist: singer, dancer, poet, mystic, or painter. *Duende* is an overpowering gift, one that sets its recipient apart from other talented, proficient artists. It separates the great from the ordinary, the inspired from the conventional, R&B from disco, Nas from the Chingys of the world.

Because *duende* pays little respect to the distinctions of wealth, education, or class, it is naturally unpredictable and surprising, as variable as weather patterns over the tropics. It blows where it wills, and seems to especially appear in the peripheries and shadows of the modern world, among the dwellers of swamps, prisons, gypsy caves, and ghettos.

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New & Noteworthy



José Anzaldo in
East of Salinas

HOLDING ON TO HOPE

The documentary film *East of Salinas* follows José Anzaldo, a smart child with an encouraging teacher, as he both dreams of the future and becomes more aware of the implications of being an undocumented child of migrant farm laborers. Produced and directed by Laura Pacheco and Jackie Mow. www.bullfrogcommunities.com

ANSWERING THE CALL

Seeking Refuge: On the Shores of the Global Refugee Crisis provides the biblical, technical, and contextual information and personal stories to help Christians new to refugee issues offer compassionate care. Written by Stephan Bauman, Matthew Soerens, and Issam Smeir from the humanitarian organization World Relief. Moody Publishers

WALKING IN THE LIGHT

Camino Divina: Walking the Divine Way combines the ancient practice of *lectio divina* with the importance of exploring God's creation. Spiritual director Gina Marie Mammano provides 12 adventures, each with a different theme and theologian, to guide your meditation and encourage you to go outside. SkyLight Paths

WHEN A BODY MEETS A BODY

Sex is not just a tricky subject in conservative churches—Christians in all traditions can be skittish. UCC pastor Bromleigh McClenaghan steps into that gap with pastoral sensitivity and theological grounding in *Good Christian Sex: Why Chastity Isn't the Only Option—And Other Things the Bible Says About Sex*. HarperOne

Disconnecting More Than Calls

LAST MONTH we surrendered. We finally cancelled service on our home landline.

Despite the growing expense of traditional home phone service, we'd kept it this long for the same reasons that many people in rural America must. For one thing, cell phone connectivity was very weak at our house. To make a voice call you had to stand next to an upstairs window. And cell phone service goes away entirely when the electric power goes out at the tower. Where we live, the telephone lines are underground and unaffected by weather, which comes in handy when, in the dead of winter, an ice storm knocks out the power and you need to order a propane delivery.

So we kept our landline service, even when the quality deteriorated and dropped calls became a regular annoyance. Finally, a few months ago, they put up another cell tower somewhere near us that somewhat



and even, according to consumer groups' complaints to the FCC, simply refused to maintain and repair the existing landline network, all with the goal of eliminating their legal obligation to connect even the poorest and remotest American households.

In our case, the villain is AT&T; in some places, it's Verizon or CenturyLink. These companies, along with cell phone giant T-Mobile, are all corporate members of the Communications and Technology Task Force of the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC). Maybe you've heard of ALEC. It's the right-wing network that brings together state legislators and corporate executives to write model bills that get introduced all over the country. ALEC first came to wide public attention when investigative journalists discovered that Arizona's draconian anti-immigrant statute had been drafted by an ALEC working group that included a representative of the Corrections Corporation of America, a private prison firm that has reaped a bonanza from the internment of undocumented people in the U.S.

THREE YEARS ago, ALEC's telecom task force began pushing a bill that would allow phone companies to stop offering landline service anywhere

that an alternative could be made available, while simultaneously dropping any regulations on the quality or cost of that "alternative" service. The model bill has been introduced in more than 30 states around the country since 2013, and it is currently under consideration by the state legislature in California.

In my home state of Kentucky, the bill was passed and signed into law last year despite the fact that its primary sponsor, Sen. Paul Hornback, admitted that the bill had been written by AT&T. "You work with the authorities in any industry to figure out what they need to move that industry forward," Hornback told the *Lexington Herald-Leader*. "It's no conflict."

The bottom line here is that we need a national telecom policy that treats access to communication and information as a basic human right. If we took that right seriously, we would be undertaking a massive public infrastructure project to bring high-speed fiber internet connections to every 'hood and hollow in the United States. Instead the digitally disenfranchised must fight to keep the pitifully inadequate and antiquated connection of a telephone landline. ■



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Big Telecom has engaged in a concerted campaign to shed its landline phone business.

improved the connection, so we pulled the plug.

This isn't just one rural family's story. The 19 million Americans (14.5 million of us rural) who depend on landline service because of no or limited broadband access have for several years been the targets of a concerted campaign by Big Telecom to shed its landline phone business. The companies hope to use the transition to a wireless and digital future to wriggle their way out from under 80 years of regulatory history mandating universal service. Toward this end, they have worked through state legislatures, petitioned the Federal Communications Commission

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Unlike the refined and ethereal figures of Olympian muses and Christian angels, the *duende* emerges from below, from the lowest and poorest strata of society, from contact with the earthly and carnal, from experiences of suffering. It is gritty, coarse, and guttural—an epiphany of beauty in raw and unstudied forms. Keats could have been speaking of the *duende* when he described the process of “soul-making”: “Do you not see how necessary a World of Pains and troubles is to school an Intelligence and make it a Soul?”

Though *duende* may visit any artist, Lorca emphasized its special affection for musicians and dancers in the throes of passion, the ones who burned brightly but briefly, the meteors of the spirit. The flamenco singer La Niña de los Peines was the epitome of this, with the *duende* erupt-



Flamenco singer La Niña de los Peines

ing through her body, convulsing her spirit. Like the Dionysian spirituality of the black church, the *duende* came to La Niña in ecstatic displays: writhing undulations, galloping and stomping feet, syncopated clapping, piercing cries, haughty eyes, hair like the wild tresses of Medusa.

I see the presence of *duende* in various forms of music that have arisen from the dregs and ashes of the modern world: the blues, jazz, soul, rock ‘n’ roll, funk, hip-hop, flamenco, the *son*, salsa, and timba. Each one of these has been considered forms of “devil’s music” and has earned the suspicion and disdain of mainstream society. There is a certain “power of blackness,” to invoke Melville’s language, in these



From *Rams*

PLAIN TALK

WHEN RONALD REAGAN and Mikhail Gorbachev met in what has been seen as the beginning of the end of the Cold War, the venue was an unassuming house overlooking the sea in Reykjavík, Iceland. Höfði House had been previously occupied by the poet Einar Benediktsson, who once wrote, “Take notice of the past if you would achieve originality.” Whatever else Einar meant, at this house, the necessity of learning from history can’t be ignored.

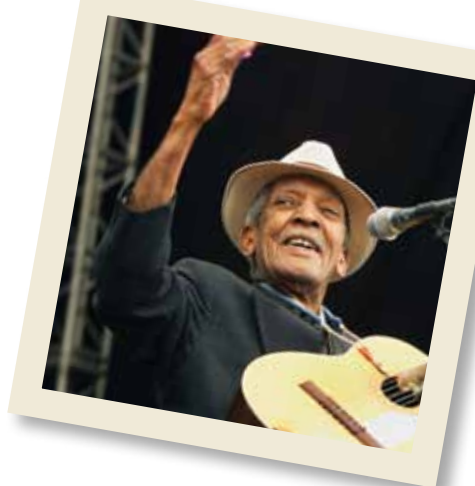
It is easier to imagine today’s enemies talking once you’ve seen the house. You see, it’s not the Avengers’ home base or one of those underground lairs favored by James Bond villains. It’s just a house, surrounded by the typical trappings of a small city—business headquarters, cafes, supermarkets. The Icelandic government uses it today for social gatherings. And what happened in it 30 years ago was at heart two people communicating, with a shared goal that transcended them both.

The notion of enemies sitting down and talking with each other is also at the heart of the magnificent new Icelandic film **Rams**, which I saw in a cinema about five minutes’ walk from Höfði. Two sheep-farming brothers live and work beside each other, but haven’t spoken for four decades. A family shadow has driven them apart—one of those decisions made by parents seeking the best for their children but not knowing how to arrive there. And so, separately, the brothers endure twice the hardships and experience only half the blessings of

life amid this most exquisite landscape. Success is ignored by the other, or serves as an occasion for jealousy rather than celebration; Christmas is spent alone, no one to share the feast, and Icelandic winters are hardest of all.

Rams is dominated by a gorgeously naturalistic central performance by Sigurður Sigurjónsson as Gummi, the younger brother burdened by his father’s legacy. When he discovers that sheep belonging to his brother, Kiddi, may have been infected with a disease that will force wholesale slaughter of the neighboring flocks, Gummi first appears to act from envy. But then a world-weary commitment to doing what’s right takes over. The disease, and the brothers’ desire to salvage something good from their broken family history, provides the kind of opportunity for change that could have seemed contrived. But in director (and scriptwriter) Grímur Hákonarson’s hands, the story is so compelling that you may find yourself hoping that such an intervention awaits you on departing the cinema. *Rams* made me think not only of the need for reconciliation between—and within—nations, but about the people from whom I feel distant, or who may feel distant from me, and to ask myself what steps I can take toward sitting down face-to-face and communicating. ■

Gareth Higgins is an Irish writer and founder of moviesandmeaning.com and irelandretreats.com.



extraordinary aesthetical achievements. Sometimes mournful and tragic, sometimes comedic and hopeful, almost always prophetic and visionary, these genres have often used their spells and incantations—hexes when necessary—to bring about aesthetic revolutions and cultural upheavals.

A “shout in the street”

In its best forms—when inspired by the *duende*—music is proof of the power of life and art to bring illumination, like sudden flashes of lightning in the dark clouds of human experience. For instance, in attending to the different genres and styles of Afro-Latin music, theology still encased in a European chrysalis may break out and soar

slums, swamps, and favelas of the world. Hip-hop is the most recent example of this science of the streets, but these themes are evident in many Afro-Latin genres, from the *son* and salsa to rumba and timba (the term “timba” originally designated marginalized neighborhoods of big cities).

When the question of soul is considered, there is an advantage in coming from the margins, a certain hermeneutical privilege in belonging to an underclass community. In the gospels, recall, it is the destitute and desperate who are the first to recognize the Messiah in the marred and humble Jesus of Nazareth. And the Hebrew Bible, too, attributes a preternatural knowledge to the suffering servants of YHWH. Afro-Latin music is a descendant of this vision. Perhaps it has its moments of genius for knowing the plight of the outsider and alien. Perhaps this

protests the judgment and offers a wealth of evidence for the soul’s extraordinary vitality and persistent exuberance.

Theology would do well to follow the logic of these musical modes of cognition: experiential, aesthetical, cultural, a lesson in truths that can be felt but not seen. Its apologetics would be much more persuasive if it supplemented the classic handmaiden of theology—philosophy—with the arts, especially music. If it takes seriously the advice of Proverbs in attending to the voice of Wisdom on street corners and crossroads, we might discover forms of knowledge that are only available through music. We might discover the uncanny beauty and undeniable revelations of the soul in Aretha Franklin, Otis Redding, James Brown, Compay Segundo, Ibrahim Ferrer, Lola Beltrán, La Niña de los Peines, Lauryn Hill, Nas, Kendrick Lamar, Shakira, Lila Downs, and many more.

In using their music to probe the mystery of the psyche, these artists bring shades of complexity to the most superficial and vapid forms of spirituality, while also summoning impossible dreams to the bleakest and most despairing of circumstances. Sometimes with their lyrics, or just with their moans and melodies, grunts, and grinds, they persuade us of the enduring and indomitable power of the soul. For this reason alone, “the Soul should stand in Awe,” as Emily Dickinson writes, when it comes to the haunting and hypnotizing ability of music to rain grace on our parched age. ■

The criticism of the concept of “soul” in some disciplines seems small, parochial, and Eurocentric.

Above, from left, musicians Compay Segundo, Lauryn Hill, and Shakira.

in new directions, exploring fresh regions of knowledge.

James Joyce hints at a venture of this sort in Stephen’s famous line in *Ulysses*: God is a “shout in the street.” Besides suggesting the potential for revelation in profane and quotidian experiences, far from the church, it could be that Joyce had in mind the lyrical, musical voice of wisdom in Proverbs: “Does not Wisdom cry out and Understanding raise her voice? On the heights along the streets, at the crossroads she takes her stand. ... Blessed is the one that hears me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors” (Proverbs 8:1-2, 34).

Whatever Joyce intended, I submit that Afro-Latin music is a testimony to this wisdom that cries and shouts from the streets, that rises like a phoenix from the ghettos and

music is a creative response to the quandary expressed by the psalmist: How shall we sing the Lord’s song in a strange land?

As an oracle of this ability to sing and dance in strange and inhospitable circumstances, the music of the Americas is a remarkable record of the soul’s agility: its capacity for survival and creativity in the face of sorrow and despair; its capacity for improvisation and resilience; its capacity for making music out of the experience of being invisible, rhapsodies out of degradation. With some of these feats in mind, the criticism of the concept of “soul” in some disciplines of contemporary science appears awfully small, parochial, and Eurocentric. Though some may be quick to proclaim the death of the soul—as they are with the death of God—the history of American music

Alex Nava, a professor of religious studies at the University of Arizona, is author of Wonder and Exile in the New World and the forthcoming In Search of Soul: Religion, Literature, and Hip Hop (University of California Press).

Reviewed by Jenna Barnett

SONGS OF LONGING

A Day for the Hunter, A Day for the Prey, by Leyla McCalla. Jazz Village.

LEYLA MCCALLA wrote the title track of her latest album *A Day for the Hunter, A Day for the Prey* while imagining the experience of the Haitian boat people—political asylum seekers who packed into sailboats headed for the U.S. only to get intercepted by the U.S. Coast Guard mid-journey and sent back to the politically volatile and violent land from which they fled. In the early 1990s, the U.S. repatriated more than 34,000 of these Haitians before hearing their asylum cases and listening to their stories.

McCalla sings their stories now—in French, Haitian Creole, and English. The album's title is a Haitian proverb that McCalla came across in an excerpt of Gage Averill's book of the same name: *A Day for the Hunter, A Day for the Prey*. McCalla explained to NPR that the phrase captures the spirit of her Haitian ancestors, who overcame slavery only to fall in and out of political turmoil, but that the proverb also points to a universal experience: "It made me think of the roles that we all play throughout our lifetimes, how we are all trying to navigate our way through this world where sometimes it feels as though we are the hunter, and sometimes we are the prey."

McCalla can make us feel like we've gone back in time through songs written years ago about people fleeing another time's violence. But McCalla's voice also pushes us to consider today's Syrian boat people, intercepted by white waters, delayed by white fear. And she urges us to consider this historically systemic turmoil alongside our own feelings of personal displacement and victory. The album's inspiration is as timeless as McCalla's voice.

Only three of the tracks on *A Day for the Hunter* are Leyla McCalla originals. All the others she arranges and bolsters with vocals from former Carolina Chocolate Drops band mate Rhiannon Giddens, the jazz guitar of Marc Ribot, and the fiddle of Louis Michot. McCalla incorporates the talents of all these musicians without crowding the sound of her songs. The instruments and voices almost take turns, giving *A Day for the Hunter* an uncluttered, focused, and conversational feel.

The conversation unofficially revolves around the post-colonial experience of the African diaspora. McCalla uses her mid-range voice and percussive cello bow to amplify the musical cultures and histories often quieted by the powers that stole their sovereignty. As a classically trained cellist and a first-generation Haitian American,



no one is more qualified for the task. Not that anyone else is taking it on.

This isn't the first time McCalla has used her album space to sing someone else's poetry. In her debut album, *Vari-Colored Songs*, she amplified and accentuated the poetry of Langston Hughes by singing his words to African-American string-band beats.

In *A Day for the Hunter*, McCalla's voice is raw, beautiful, and full of historic and present longings: A mother longing for her missing daughter ("Salangadou"), a love-stricken soldier longing for honorable discharge from Vietnam ("Vietnam"), and a universal narrator longing for ancestral prayers ("A Day for the Hunter, A Day for the Prey"), for bravery to fall like the leaves ("Let It Fall"), and for home (all throughout). Amid wide bow strokes, smooth female harmonies, and flowing finger picking, a theme of movement emerges. Movement is the thread that lyrically holds the 12 tracks together, making the album dedication all the more poignant: "to the human spirit,

ever in search of freedom, love, safe harbor, and a sense of home."

In "Les Plats Sont Tous Mis Sur la Table," a song originally written by the great Creole fiddle player Canray Fontenot, McCalla asks in French, "Where will I go to find a place where the table is fully set?" Her bow slides across the strings while a triangle tings the beat. The mood feels light but the question resonates all the way through to track four—a child's lullaby called "Little Sparrow" originally performed by Chicago African-American folk artist Ella Jenkins. It's the

saddest track on the album—a ballad for a tiny bird searching for home in the snow after missing her flight south for the winter.

But McCalla stays true to her album's proverbial namesake, saving room for songs fitting for the day the prey becomes the hunter. Try not to dance to "Fey-O." Try not to imagine rosin and spirits rising in her arrangement of Bebe Carriere's "Bluerunner."

In the album's cover art, McCalla sits in a white boat in the middle of what appears to be a Louisiana bayou, cello between her legs, subtle smile across her face. As precarious a position as this may be for McCalla and for her potentially buoyant but surely delicate cello, she looks perfectly at peace, perfectly at home. She looks quite a bit like a hunter—on the search for idyllic scenes, for the underplayed histories of her ancestors, and for really beautiful music. ■

Jenna Barnett, a former Sojourners editorial assistant, works for the International Rescue Committee in San Diego.

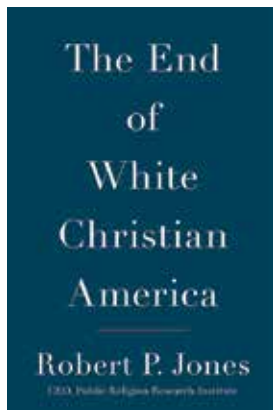
Reviewed by C. Christopher Smith

R.I.P. WHITE CHURCH?

The End of White Christian America, by Robert P. Jones. Simon & Schuster.

AS THE BLACK LIVES

Matter movement has shone a light on police brutality against black people across the country, the public conversation in the United States has been unable to ignore the legacy of racism that shapes many of our nation's most vital institutions. In his important new book, *The End of White Christian America*, Robert P. Jones, CEO of the Public Religion Research



Institute (PRRI), makes the bold claim that White Christian America (WCA)—the fertile ground that gave root to and energized the legacy of American racism—is dead. Granted, this does not mean the death of racism. But for those of us striving for racial reconciliation, the changing societal narrative that Jones offers here is a hopeful one.

Jones begins the book with a tongue-in-cheek obituary for WCA: “Although examiners have not been able to pinpoint the exact time of death, the best evidence

illusion that it was the cultural pivot around which the country turned.”

One of the book's greatest strengths is Jones' case for the decline and death of WCA, bolstered by an array of key data from PRRI research. The hub of the book's argument centers on three key factors for the demise of WCA. The first factor is the political failure of the “White Christian Strategy,” a thread

that includes the Southern Strategy, marked by the mass shift of Southern voters from the Democratic Party to the Republican Party between the 1960s and the 1980s. It also extends to include the Moral Majority of the 1980s, other groups (including the Christian Coalition and the Family Research Council) that carried the banner of family values into the 1990s, and, more recently, the rise of the tea party. The second factor named by Jones is the fairly rapid cultural shift to majority acceptance of gay marriage, which has had a much more devastating effect on the evangelical branch of WCA than its mainline counterpart. The third and final factor is the demographic trend that means that by 2050 the U.S. will no longer having a majority white population.

The End of White Christian America leverages PRRI's vast body of research to articulate a narrative of recent cultural shifts that together destroyed one of the most significant historical touchstones of American public life. After reading, rereading, and digesting this book, I'm still not completely convinced there is a singular White Christian America. And even if there is, the overwhelming brunt of the societal changes Jones describes seems to fall on the evangelical branch of WCA, not the mainline branch.

Despite my quibbles, I recognize the significance of Jones' work and of its timely release in the thick of this presidential election season. The fall of WCA, thankfully, does not imply the demise of Christianity

in our land. But insights from the story will be useful to church leaders at the local and denominational levels as they seek to imagine a future for God's people in a more diverse, pluralistic United States. ■

C. Christopher Smith is founding editor of The Englewood Review of Books and author, most recently, of Reading for the Common Good (IVP Books).

Reviewed by Eric Anglada

BEYOND THE BOOM

Fracture: Essays, Poems, and Stories on Fracking in America, edited by Taylor Brorby and Stefanie Brook Trout. Ice Cube Press.

“WE ABUSE LAND because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect.” So wrote Aldo Leopold in his ecological classic *A Sand County Almanac*, published in 1949. That same year, Erle Halliburton experimented with pumping a slurry of oil and sand into a wellhole in Oklahoma, patenting a new process he dubbed “Hydraulic.” Within the next five years, Halliburton was treating more than 3,000 wells a month that way.

Short for “hydraulic fracturing,” fracking—a word now included in Merriam-Webster—is the process of drilling and injecting fluid into the ground at high pressure in order to release oil or natural gas inside. Today, thanks to recent technological developments, more than a million fracking sites dot the U.S. landscape.

The environmental vision of Leopold and the actions of Halliburton that fateful March both haunt the recent literary collection *Fracture: Essays, Poems, and Stories on Fracking in America*. With literary genres that range from verse to essay and fable to investigative journalism, *Fracture* chronicles the ecological and cultural ruptures resulting from this highly controversial phenomenon. Co-editors Taylor Brorby



Jones begins the book with a tongue-in-cheek obituary for White Christian America.

suggests that WCA finally succumbed in the latter part of the first decade of the 21st century.” He ends the book with a eulogy for WCA that is much more serious in tone and draws upon the stages of grief named by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross in her eminent book *On Death and Dying*.

Jones defines the WCA as a distinctly Protestant entity, with two primary branches, white mainline Protestants and white evangelical Protestants. Jones notes that although these two subgroups are often at odds, together they comprise the “single dynasty” of WCA. “For most of the nation's life, White Christian America was big enough, cohesive enough, and influential enough,” Jones writes, “to pull off the

Questar gas rig and fracking pond in Sublette County, Wyo.

Dave Showalter



and Stefanie Brook Trout have put together a devastating, disturbing collection that should be read in small bits, lest you be overwhelmed.

Sojourners columnist Bill McKibben, for his part, highlights tiny Sublette County in Wyoming, whose massive concentration of wells has created ozone levels to rival those of Houston and Los Angeles. Kathryn Miles writes of the surge in earthquakes in Oklahoma, a result of the millions of gallons of saltwater pulled out of each fracking site and reinjected into basement rock. (Oklahoma, she points out, is now the most seismically active state in the lower 48, three times more active than California.) Another author laments the loss of the stunning bluffs in the Driftless region of the Midwest, denuded for their “frac sand” that is the per-

the ecological devastation in Williston—most salient being the 1,100 oil spills in 2011 alone—Pope Francis’ reproach comes to mind: “The Earth, our home, is beginning to look more and more like an immense pile of filth.” But there’s also the social upheaval in Williston and other “boomtowns”: the dramatic rise in drugs, noise, sex trafficking, and rape—a reflection, it seems clear, of the violation of the land. “Our quality of life is gone,” testified a Williston county commissioner in a state hearing. “Absolutely gone. My community is gone, and I’m heartbroken.”

“You think, my god, how is this possible, that humans could do this to the Earth?” muses Kathleen Dean Moore in her essay. “The obvious answer is, what’s possible for humans to do depends on the story we tell

In tiny Sublette County in Wyoming, a massive concentration of wells has created ozone levels to rival those of Houston and Los Angeles.

fect size to hold open the cracks of shale rock while the gas seeps out—contaminating precious aquifers in the process. Then there is southeast Ohio, which one contributor declares “under occupation,” both above and below the surface of the earth.

But it is Williston, N.D.—the subject of several contributions in this collection—that adds the most profound dose of tragedy to the storyline. In the best poem in the volume, Debra Marquart writes, “north dakota i’m worried about you / the companies you keep all these new friends north dakota / beyond the boom, beyond the extraction of precious resources / do you really think they care what becomes of you.”

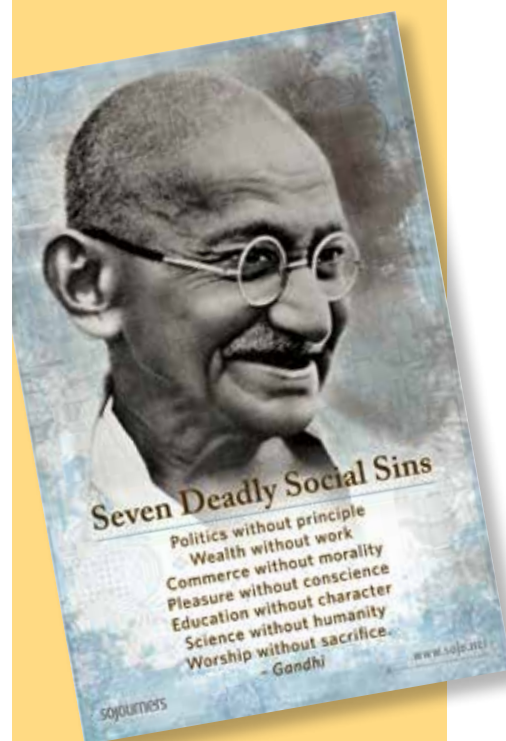
As various pieces detail the ugliness of

ourselves.” By the time you finish this staggering book, you will understand the need for what Jon Jensen, director of the Center for Sustainable Communities at Luther College in Iowa, calls “a countervailing narrative, a different way of picturing our world and our way of relating to the planet and to individual places.”

Fracture lays bare the choice presented by Aldo Leopold: We can understand land as community or as commodity. As this collection makes clear, the choice couldn’t be more urgent. ■

Eric Anglada is co-founder of the new St. Isidore Catholic Worker farm in southwest Wisconsin.

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A Testing Ground for Community

IF THE SWELTERING heat were not enough to dampen the midsummer soul, D.C.'s metro system has shut down portions of its train lines for long-overdue repairs, leaving us retreating to our homes—and, if we're lucky, our porches: the outdoor living rooms of a city.

Summer is a time when lethargy reigns, especially here in the humid semi-South. Unlike in the North, where frigid winter inculcates an obstinate determination to prove that weather won't hold us back, the South is a respecter of heat. Come August, everything *s l o w s d o w n*.

There's no better time for porches than in a humid heat, when sleepy hospitality reigns supreme. Summer is the season for public myth-shaping, when private dreams and tweeted ideologies collide on the street with other humans and the full cacophony of life lived outside. Our systemic ills are most visible in the summer: residents suffering from water shut-offs, police brutality committed and pardoned, an education system that affords some children elite summer camps and denies others a glimpse



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urban design, proximity is power. Front porches, just slightly removed from the chaotic spontaneity of summer streets, are both cachet and a basic necessity—permeable culture containers waiting to capture the overflow.

And in D.C., a city with skyrocketing rent and booming population, affordable housing is difficult to come by. So having a front porch means regular congregations, planned and unplanned. We often can't control who, or what, comes onto our porches—being “around” means being part of community, in all it entails.

Many such collisions of myth with reality have for me happened on a porch—a slightly more private public, and a testing ground for community. My current porch frequently hosts artists and musicians, a happy carousel of friends and strangers sharing common pursuits. But several months ago it also provided cover for an attempted assault, when an aggressive stranger followed a flatmate up the stairs onto the dark landing. It gave us a view into the grove across our street as police removed

two homeless people from their hideout. As the weather heats up, citywide petitions are landing at our door with greater frequency, as are reminders to vote for wise and just representation.

Who we welcome to our porches determines the narratives we will pay attention to and remember. And this is in rather important contrast to our public squares such as Twitter, devoid of social contract or codes of behavior; and our tightly-curated environments such as Facebook, a newsfeed of mirrors to our own opinions and experiences.

Summer is a nostalgic season, and this is a nostalgic year—a reminder of the brittle, bitter limits of wishing for a time in which a very particular few of us would feel comfortable. We long for the narratives that we can imagine ourselves fitting into, and those narratives grow more complex the more we see and engage with the community right outside our door. Who is on our porch matters. ■



Catherine Woodiwiss is Sojourners' senior associate web editor.

Having a front porch means regular congregations, planned and unplanned.

of the outdoors, the merry-go-round of ads reminding us that “summer” is skin-deep and buyable. So is our hospitality most visible—music drifting from one door to the next, neighbors sharing an extra lemonade.

In earlier decades, houses were designed for life to happen just off the street. So the living rooms of most houses in D.C. are in the front—kitchens, studies, and bathrooms in the back or on another floor altogether. The dream of safe ensconcement away from the unpredictable intrusions of neighbors or vendors is unique to suburbia—in

Heber Brown III

Bio: Rev. Heber Brown III is pastor of Pleasant Hope Baptist Church in Baltimore. Brown, Aleya Fraser, and Darriel Harris started the Black Church Food Security Network to connect black churches in food deserts with black farmers and urban growers.

Website: blackchurchfoodsecurity.net

1 How did the Black Church Food Security Network get started? As a result of the uprising [following the death of Freddie Gray], many corner stores in the most impoverished neighborhoods in Baltimore were put out of commission. It was an unjust arrangement to have entire neighborhoods dependent on corner stores for their food before the uprising, but the uprising intensified that already strained and unjust social arrangement.

Aleya [Fraser] started to call her farmer friends and food distributors—African-American grocers in Philadelphia and D.C.—and they started moving food to Baltimore. We transformed my church into a food depot and distribution center. We would process food donations from all over, and then we would pile the food in our church bus and I would drive the food around to those communities that needed food. We would set up shop on the corner and give out the food. We did that for nearly three weeks, and we realized that we had the beginnings of an alternative food system. The name came later; the action came first.

2 Before the Black Church Food Security Network, you started a garden in your church's front yard.

Why? Whatever land that God gave you and whatever land your church sits on, you can use it to the glory of God, your church, and your community. Ministry can also mean what you do in the soil just as much as what you do in the sanctuary. I started the garden five years ago because I noticed that in my pastoral visits to the hospital to tend to members who were sick, many of them were sick because of diet-related diseases. I wanted to do something more than pray. For many in my congregation, fresh food was nearby, but it was priced

at a point that we couldn't reach. We couldn't make that a part of our regular grocery shopping. We got so frustrated by that dynamic that we started Maxine's Garden. It's very personal, in terms of what this means for our church.

3 How does food justice relate to other justice issues? When it comes to food, there is often a very narrow focus on nutrition. But for the communities that I'm in relationship with, focusing on nutrition is too narrow in trying to understand the complexity of neighborhoods that are under immense strain and burden. If you're talking about a lack of nutrition for impoverished neighborhood, it's often, yes, about lack of access to food, but it's also about a community's lack of access to jobs. So it's not just food deserts, it's a job desert. It's neighborhoods that have low-quality schools, and these same neighborhoods have consistent bouts with police brutality. Just focusing on a "food desert" without recognizing the other indicators of health means that your solution is only going to [work] half as well.

4 Why is the network founded in the black church?

It makes sense for us to be the *Black Church* Food Security Network because when black people can depend on no other institution, they can depend on the black church. Black churches are the last anchor institution in these communities that have been victimized by economic injustice and political abandonment. Historically, the black church is the most sustainable institution in black America. From the founding of the African Methodist Episcopal Church in the 1780s up until now, the black church has survived world wars, it has survived oppression, it has survived any number of economic



Rev. Heber Brown III works outside his church in "Maxine's Garden," named to honor an 84-year-old church member.

downturns. It also has survived lynching and terrorism. The black church continues. Now, if that's not the definition of sustainability, then I don't know what is.

5 What would food security look like?

We envision people, especially people of color, having access to the same quality of food and opportunities that more economically affluent communities enjoy. We envision a community that experiences not only food security, but food *sovereignty*. That's different from security in that the local community owns the means by which the food is produced. It decreases dependency on big multinational corporations to feed us. In the communities where we work, grocery stores just don't come, and the ones that were in the community, they left. It's not enough to have a better arrangement of dependency. We need to have ownership of the production. In a time when people are excited by and celebrating local food and local economies, we're growing one right here in Baltimore.

—Interview by Caroline Barnett

Photo courtesy of Heber Brown III

The Living, Breathing Church

AUGUST MARKS A TIME OF TRANSITION. Summer is fading. Fall is near. If you haven't gotten your vacation in, it'll have to be rushed because school starts shortly. Retail prices are "lowered" for back-to-school shopping. Churches are preparing for the return of students. Pastors are sneaking in a last-minute retreat or a continuing-education class. Church is in flux. What about our behavior, our faith lived out in the world? The lectionary passages for these weeks speak directly to this context of common life. How will we keep our promises? Will we prioritize the Sabbath? Are our interior and exterior lives built around hospitality?

God is not in flux, even if we are. God still longs for our worship. God is clear that the kind of worship that brings God joy leads to a life that demonstrates God's peace and restoration. We'll need more than good ideas and willpower. We'll need the gift of faith to act in the world as if God is still making all things new. Even with all of the transitions around us, including the mechanics of church, we'll need to make sure worship is as authentic and passionate as ever.



Do your pastor a favor and lend a hand, say a special prayer, extend grace. If you're a pastor, then safety nets are in order. Now is the time to be connecting with colleagues, sitting with your spiritual director, visiting the therapist. Your people need you. You need God. The world needs the church!

Brandon Wrencher is pastor of Blackburn's Chapel United Methodist Church and executive director of Blackburn Community Outreach in Todd, N.C.

[AUGUST 7]

Promises to Keep

Genesis 15:1-6; Psalm 33:12-22; Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-16; Luke 12:32-40

IN GENESIS 15, we find Abram just out of battle. He's recovered his nephew, women from his community, and loads of property. But there is still something missing: He has no children of his own to carry forward his name.

Abram is a visionary. But without God's promise to bring the vision to fruition, he's only dabbling in wishful thinking. How else can one cope with that moment when death is knocking, and the vision is still far off? "Like anybody, I would like to live a long life," preached Dr. King. "Longevity has its place. But I'm not concerned about that now. I just want to do God's will. And he's allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I've looked over. And I've seen the Promised Land."

But sometimes a vision and promise isn't enough. We live in a world of instant gratification. The expiration dates on our visions feel as if they are creeping up on us. The best visionaries struggle with this and with "promises." We live in a time of increasing divorce rates, declining church

memberships, and hate-filled campaign rhetoric. In our day it seems deception and fear trump the keeping of promises. We'll need something more. Abram and the psalmist felt this, which is why the author of Hebrews has taught us to know Abraham not by his visions or promises made to him, but by his faith. The psalmist calls it trust (33:21). King saw it too. "I

When there's talk of fire and Jesus, the "nones" run for cover.

may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the Promised Land! ... Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord!" Either way, in order for vision and promise to stick in the face of death, we need the gift of faith to trust in "the glory of the coming of the Lord!"

[AUGUST 14]

Peace Through Division?

Jeremiah 23:23-29; Psalm 82; Hebrews 11:29 - 12:2; Luke 12:49-56

WHEN THERE'S TALK of fire and Jesus (as in Luke 12:49-56), the "nones" run for cover. In scriptures such as these, fundamentalist Christians often find proof-texts for the fires of hell and mainliners have another occasion for hermeneutical gymnastics.

"I came to bring fire to the earth," says Jesus (12:49), "and how I wish it were already kindled!" A difficult text, indeed! No meek and mild Jesus here. We'd better interpret Jesus rightly. If not, then we too are hypocrites. Jesus is facing the evil of the cross. With blazing power, he will be raised to new life, conquering sin and death. This is one who is preparing for the fire baptism of the Spirit. When we share in this baptism, we are incorporated into the family of God, the body of Christ.

This kind of baptism causes all sorts of trouble for the world's definition of family and belonging. To be part of the family of God, of Christ's body, is to be bound to Jesus' body among the least of these, among the enemy, among the foreigner, the hungry, the poor, the prisoner, the sick. This is participating in the very peace of Christ. And this peace, which brings together those who the world says should stay apart, is a site of division.

Theologian Willie James Jennings puts it this way: "If the social order and the processes of commodification are not transformed in relation to the body through salvation, then salvation becomes hyperlocalized to a single relationship: God and the one being saved."

Jesus, Prince of Peace, brings judgment and division by interrupting the world's logic of belonging. How is God calling your church into a new "we"? Who are the most vulnerable among you? Who are those members of the body whose differences are repulsive to you? Who are those "others" from whom it feels "natural" to be separated? Boundary-transgressing is at the heart of the peacebuilding to which Jesus calls us. May we interpret Jesus rightly in our own times.

[AUGUST 21]

A Phony Sabbath?

Isaiah 58:9b-14; Psalm 103:1-8;
Hebrews 12:18-29; Luke 13:10-17

THE PROPHETS teach us better than others in scripture that there is real moral responsibility in claiming intimacy with God. True religion is about living right, as the old saints say. The apex of that living is Sabbath. Unlike some common notions of Sabbath as “a day off” or a time for leisurely comforts, the biblical writers align Sabbath squarely with worship, compassion, and justice. These are activities wholly focused on God and neighbor. “I” and “me” are only relevant as they find their orientation in prioritizing our relationship with God and God’s creation. “We” is the language and practice of true worship, of Sabbath, of those that claim Christ as their lord and savior. Walter Brueggemann sets the context when he writes, “Thus the Sabbath of the fourth commandment is an act of trust in the subversive, exodus-causing God of the first commandment, an act of submission to the restful God of commandments one, two, and three. Sabbath is a practical divestment so that neighborly engagement, rather than production and consumption, defines our lives.”

Those that don’t take this command of Sabbath and worship seriously better watch out! In direct confrontation with the fragility and political correctness of those who cringe at the word “judgment” in our contemporary society, God is not unclear: Judgment and worship are inseparable. Brueggemann continues, “Worship that does not lead to neighborly compassion and justice cannot be faithful worship of YHWH. The offer is a phony Sabbath!” The God of Sabbath is a consuming fire for those that want to continue with cheap reverence and grace. But judgment shouldn’t be our motivation for true worship. The promises of restoration, peace, and joy are bound up with faithful Sabbath-keepers; neither should these be the focus of our motivation. It is the one behind both judgment and promise that we should be seeking.

“Preaching the Word,” Sojourners’ online resource for sermon preparation and Bible study, is available at sojo.net/ptw.

[AUGUST 28]

Creating Space

Sirach 10:12-18; Psalm 112;
Hebrews 13:1-8, 15-16; Luke 14:1, 7-14

HOSPITALITY IS NOT primarily about dishes, delicacies, and décor. These too easily entrap the host and guest in the cultural practices of honor and duty. Jesus reminds the disciples that such practices are tied to ego, of wanting to be repaid, of wanting to be noticed.

“A life of hospitality begins in worship,” Christine Pohl reminds us, “with a recognition of God’s grace and generosity. Hospitality is not first a duty and responsibility; it is first a response of love and gratitude for God’s love and welcome to us.” Hospitality is ultimately a matter of the heart. Is the ego or God directing your heart? There’s not space for both: “The Lord overthrows the thrones of rulers, and enthrones the lowly in their place” (Sirach 10:14). The ego is a clear demonstration of forsaking the Lord, of a heart distanced from God’s direction (see Sirach 10:12).

A heart of lowliness and humility has the capacity for trust. Trust in God to work through God’s people in a way that is full of grace and new possibilities. This is why Jesus opens up our imagination for hospitality to those with whom a prideful heart has no place: the poor, the prisoner, the tortured, the crippled, the lame, the blind, the stranger. And yet, to be hospitable to these presumes an open heart to all of life, beginning with the ordinary. Hospitality, writes Henri Nouwen, “means primarily the creation of a free space where the stranger can enter and become a friend instead of an enemy. Hospitality is not to change people, but to offer them space where change can take place. It is not to bring men and women over to our side, but to offer freedom not disturbed by dividing lines.”

Jesus makes sure to remind us that hospitality begins at home (Hebrews 13:4). Hospitality is about all of life, from the mundane to the spontaneous to the traumatic. Only an open heart can live up to this call—a heart of contentment that trusts God is present always, a heart whose continual testimony is: “The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can anyone do to me?” (Hebrews 13:6). ■

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Now for the *Real* Fireworks

JULY IS THE month of our long-awaited political conventions, the final stop in a torturous electoral journey that most assuredly made our Founding Fathers roll over in their graves, throw up in revulsion, then roll back over with a raging headache, severe back spasms, and an irritable bowel. It's been a tough year.

The Democratic Party will be meeting in Philadelphia, "The City of Brotherly Love," and Republicans will gather in Cleveland, "The City That's Having Second Thoughts," because there was once talk about delegates bringing in their own firearms. But local officials convinced them to bring in a covered dish instead. (Fortunately, this still comports with the NRA's noble philosophy: "The only thing that stops a bad guy with a casserole is a good guy with a casserole.")

Delegates from across the nation will be gathering to affirm the choice of their party's primary voters, the common folk whose wisdom is not



Ken Davis

bowels line up before the morning speeches. (Tip: Leave room for cream and three shots of vitriol directed at the other party.)

The final two candidates have been chosen, but the acrimony has just begun. Frustrations will be flowing through the convention halls, and it may take a higher power to find resolve. Or in this case, a super power in the form of delegates whose very name suggests the ability to bend steel and use their X-ray vision to peer through the smoke of back rooms and choose the most powerful person in the free world. (Which is where, again? It sounds like a nice place to live.)

They are called "superdelegates," people who can vote for whomever they wish, regardless of popular will or the presence of kryptonite. Many of them are already pledged to a particular candidate, but their pledge is not binding, unlike their colorful but skintight costumes that sometimes gather uncomfortably under the regular clothing they wear on the convention floor. (They think they're in disguise, but you can always tell a superdelegate. They walk funny and scratch a lot.)

The conventions will end under an avalanche of balloons with the usual shouting and applause, or as much as people can applaud while at the same time keeping their fingers crossed.

And don't be fooled by the silly

hats. The delegates this year are bearing an unusually heavy burden of responsibility. The future of the nation hangs in the balance, and they'll take it very seriously, just as soon as they clear their wedgies.

THEN THE CHOSEN Republican and Democratic presidential candidates will travel to the hinterlands and listen to the hopes and dreams of average Americans. But only for a couple minutes, until they remember how few electoral votes are in the hinterlands. Then they'll shake their heads, laugh at their silly mistake, and concentrate on Ohio and Florida. (Sorry Idaho and Dakotas 1 and 2.)

Predictably, candidates will be using the familiar vernacular of a national campaign, often referring to "the American people," even though few politicians have actually met any. But this year's campaign will also feature language new to the arena of public discourse. Rest assured, phrases such as "#*%!!#%&" and "#*%@+\$#!" are heartfelt and ably spoken, and roughly translate as "building unity between all Americans, regardless of race or gender. Unless they need to use a public restroom."

There's that rolling-over sound again. Is it too late to give the Founding Fathers some Tylenol? ■

Ed Spivey Jr. is art director of Sojourners.

Don't let the balloons fool you...

always appreciated on Capitol Hill, but whose wishes deserved to be carried out. It's the very essence of democracy, which this year featured the aerobic benefits of pushing and shoving. Hey, nobody said it would be pretty. But sometimes you have to take the road less traveled—the one paved with good intentions and littered with the signs you ripped out of your neighbor's yard. But eventually you get back to the main highway of truth so the limousines of hope can ... uhm ... nope. Lost the metaphor. Sorry.

IT'S EASY to imagine the pandemonium that will afflict the conventions this year, and not just at the nearest Starbucks when thousands of impatient delegates with raging headaches, severe back spasms, and irritable

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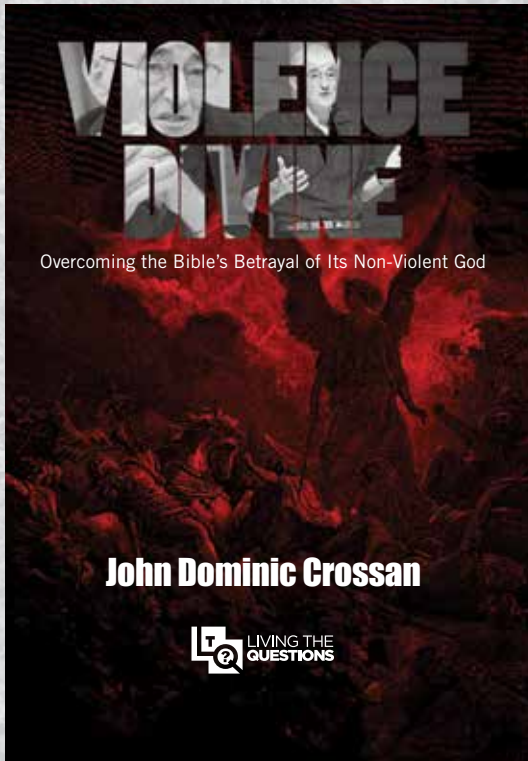
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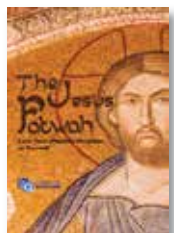
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